Chronicles
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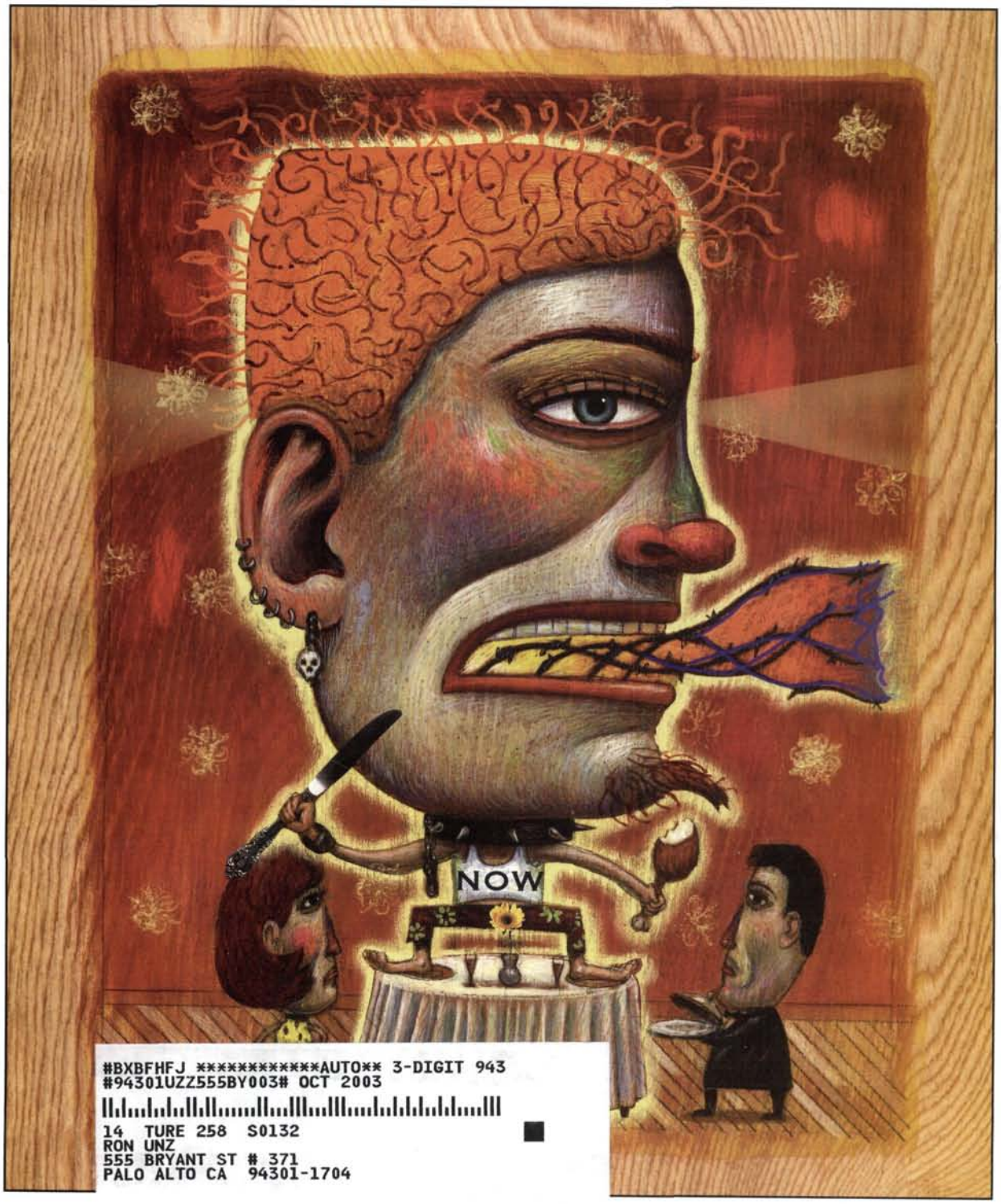
Tabled Manners



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Q: What Must the Church Do For Liberals to Love Her?

A: Become the Whore of Babylon

Liberalism is supposed to be synonymous with open-mindedness, yet most liberals continue to be deeply bigoted against Catholicism. According to Bill Donohue, whose Catholic League vanquished Disney's Catholic-trashing TV show *Nothing Sacred*, anti-Catholicism is "the last respectable bias." Liberal opinion has long regarded the Catholic Church as something like the Whore of Babylon. But nowadays liberals feel compassion for whores, would love to see prostitution legalized and whores unionized from sea to shining sea, with the Department of Health and Human Services running the whorehouses.

So there's a little problem: How can liberals continue to hate the Church when they themselves embrace whoredom — indeed, would love to make every woman a whore?

Consider the rest of the liberal utopia: raunchy sex ed, titillating TV shows and movies, free condoms for every teenager, free abortions in case the condoms fail, full rights and benefits for shack-ups, same-sex "marriage" (helps devalue the currency of real marriage, you know), and adultery a matter of privacy not character. So yes, the liberal vision is: Every gal a slut.

So it won't do to lambaste the Church for being a whore. Therefore the Church is now castigated for being a prude — the Prude of Peoria, shall we say. Indeed, liberals today could only love the Church if she did in fact become the Whore of Babylon.

We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW, a militantly Catholic monthly magazine, aren't cowed by the liberal bigots. We present the authentic Catholic vision to a hostile culture in a forthright way. Not surprisingly, *Newsweek* finds us "cheeky."

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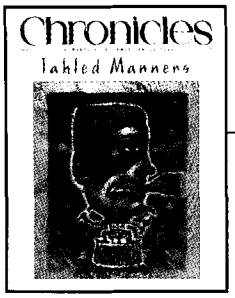

Chronicles

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A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On the Managerial State

In "The Proletarian Weapon" (*Principalities & Powers*, May), Samuel Francis has restated his theory that we are living "in a society that is between civilizations," the old one being "bourgeois, Western, and generally Christian" and the new one "managerial, non-Western . . . egalitarian." When he first said this, I thought he was being ironic, but apparently he wants us to take him seriously. I must demur.

As Pitirim Sorokin pointed out in *The Crisis of Our Age*, great civilizations cannot survive without a considerable measure of "ideational" content—widely shared religious beliefs that strike deep into the soul of man. To use C.S. Lewis's terms, the spiritual underpinnings of society must be "thick," not "clear"—they must acknowledge blood ties, the power of the numinous, a dark mystery at the core of human life, and so on. I'm not sure whom Dr. Francis would count as members of the managerial elite, but I dare say that they look with scorn on anything thick. Those who are "rationalist" and "secularist" would probably like to do without religion altogether, but if they must have it, let it be clear, rational, even scientific—something modern people can believe in. But such an effort is doomed to fail. Aristotle's *Ethics*, being clear, did not work like leaven to transform a whole civilization; the Gospel, being thick, did.

—*Geoffrey Rommel*
Berwyn, IL

Dr. Francis Replies:

It is always bracing to be criticized for not saying that which you have actually said, but which the critic has contrived to miss entirely. In the first place, Mr. Rommel might care to consult more than the one or two columns of mine that he appears to have seen. If he does, he will find that the discussion of "managerial society" in "The Proletarian Weapon" was not merely the second time I have brought up the subject. As readers of *Chronicles* and other publications for which I have written know, I have been discussing the implications of James Burnham's theory of the managerial revolution for some 20 years now, and it is clear that Mr. Rommel would profit from more exposure to the larger body of my work.

Moreover, one of the more recent occasions on which I discussed the subject was in my *Principalities & Powers* column in the November 2000 issue, entitled "Are We Decadent?" There, I noted that "managerial civilization" exhibits the very flaws that Mr. Rommel accuses me of ignoring and that it is problematic whether it can ever overcome these flaws. "A civilization that can think of no better justification of itself than dishwashers and higher living standards can hardly be called a civilization at all," I wrote, in commenting on the very lack of "thickness" that Mr. Rommel is so breathless to tell us about.

On Deep Ecology

Just what does Chilton Williamson, Jr., your "environmental" thinker, believe? In "Now Hear This!!!" (*The Hundredth Meridian*, May), he claims that the federal government wants to "remove the existing rural population from the land." That is an outlandish remark. Mr. Williamson says that "nearly all environmentalists are effectively Deep Ecologists now . . . " Wrong again. Most of them are so shallow that they do little more than hunt and fish, drive ATVs and snowmobiles, while calling themselves "environmentalists." Contrary to Mr. Williamson's arguments, the real war on the West is being sponsored by the recreational-vehicle industry, five-dollar-per-acre land-grab mining companies, a timber industry that harvests timber below cost, and immigrants—illegal *and* legal—who have not the slightest notion of how a healthy nation can hold itself together.

Mr. Williamson supports Gale Norton *because* she is a clone of James Watt and complains that his gas bill is too high because the environmentalists were "talking with rocks, trees, grizzly bears, and clouds . . . " What is this supposed to mean?

So that there will be elk in the forests for Mr. Williamson to gun down with his rifle and for Indian tribes to attack with a fleet of ATVs and snowmobiles, many of us in the environmental wars have spent

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a large part of our lives maintaining federal, state, and private land. Are those of us who choose to preserve nature worthy of the epithet "slaves to nature"?

Mr. Williamson should stick to knockabout tales of the people and places of the West, the landscapes, the distances, and what immigration is doing to take it all away. *That*, we know, he can do with the best of them!

David Tillotson
Lake Mills, WI

Mr. Williamson Replies:

Mr. Tillotson's rant is so off the mark, tendentious, and falsely suggestive, so based on what seems a deliberately careless reading of what I wrote, that I have a hard time finding the string to pull that would unravel this ball of confused charges.

First, Mr. Tillotson claims my suggestion that the federal government wants to remove citizens from the land is "outlandish." While I don't specify the feds as having this goal in mind, at least two plans I know of are currently in train—one for the past ten years or more—to vacate the Northern Plains and return them to the status of a buffalo commons.

Second, I don't know the environmentalists Mr. Tillotson knows. The organized movement I'm familiar with out West is certainly Deep Ecologist, at bottom. And it *does* support—in fact, it is behind—every goal and campaign against the traditional West.

Third, I don't complain that my gas bill is too high: I merely allude to the fact. Further, I don't take sides here on the Gale Norton appointment, though I consider the idea of a "Great Undoing" laughable.

Fourth, is Mr. Tillotson an anti-gunner and an animal-rights activist as well as an environmentalist, as his rhetoric suggests? (Hunting is *not* a "sport," as José Ortega y Gasset once explained.)

Fifth, of course, the act of protecting and preserving nature doesn't make you a slave. It is, rather, the spirit in which one acts, not the acts themselves, that enslave.

What confuses Mr. Tillotson, I believe, is that he—quite rightly—discerns that I despise organized environmentalism at least as much as I loathe the pro-development lobby. If anything, I despise them more: Carl Pope is a more hypocritical human being than Dick Cheney, as the Sierra Club's refusal to condemn current immigration policy proves.

On the Editor's Art

Although there's been little reason to complain about the types of editorial changes made by your magazine, an unsettling amount of liberty seems to have been taken with my recent review, "The Janus Faces of War" (May). Specifically, the concluding sentence was made to express a judgment different from the one I intended to convey. While I certainly do not share Alan J. Levine's predominantly positive opinions about the political changes that occurred during the Roosevelt and Truman presidencies, I believe he writes in a responsible and often courageous way. His stated views on ethnic whining, social mores, and the Cold War have served to isolate him professionally and ideologically from the historiographical mainstream.

From what I can see, the mistake in wording occurred because of a departure from the praiseworthy practice followed, except in this case, of sending me galleys before printing my essay. I've every confidence that this practice will be resumed.

Dr. Paul Gottfried
Elizabethtown, PA

The Editors Reply:

We faxed Dr. Gottfried his galleys. If he failed to receive them, it was his duty to inform us. We admit to making changes in his review, both for the sake of clarity, correctness, and coherence, and to eliminate some of the exuberant encomia lavished upon a writer whom Dr. Gottfried acknowledges to be his good friend and former student.

On the Old Ballgame

John O'Neill's "Letter From Detroit: Field of Schemes (*Correspondence*, April)" caught my eye, as I have visited some 30 different Major League Baseball parks in my 50-plus years of existence. When I found out that 1999 was the final year for Tiger Stadium, I decided to spend a week in Detroit and catch a few games. It is difficult to account for nostalgic sentiments about a place I had only visited via television. I can't begin to imagine the sorrows of the local faithful.

In 2000, my travels took me close to Michigan, so I made a side trip to see Comerica Park. In addition to the Ferris wheel and carousel mentioned by O'Neill, there are not one, not two, but *six* statues of Tiger greats at the main entrance and on top of the scoreboard, and the main concourse has exhibits of Tiger history. The tiger gargoyles with baseballs in their mouths are a clever touch.

Sucker that I am for old ballparks (I have every one of those coffee-table books on the deconstructed fields of yore), I have to admit that I enjoyed the amenities and architectural detail of Comerica Park. It was a bit Disneylandish for a nuts-and-bolts town like Detroit, but impressive nonetheless. My most lasting impression, however, was one the architects never intended.

Comerica Park is designed so that fans sitting behind home plate will have a panoramic view of the city skyline. Arriving early for a night game, I couldn't help but notice the transformation that takes place as the sky darkens. As the lights on the downtown buildings come on, it gradually becomes apparent that about half the office towers are unlit—in other words, abandoned. A downtown walking tour in the daylight reveals a number of venerable old buildings that would be at home in the Chicago Loop. But there is no demand for office space in downtown Detroit, so there is no money to renovate the old buildings and no need to tear them down to make way for new buildings. What can you expect of a town that peaked at close to two million people in the 1950's and now has less than half that many? And abandoned buildings are not limited to downtown.

Tiger owner Michael Illich, who also renovated the Fox Theater (a block away from Comerica Park), is doubtless hoping that the ballpark and the new football stadium under construction (the Detroit Lions currently have a domed stadium in nearby Pontiac) will bring people back to downtown Detroit. Illich, who also owns Little Caesar's Pizza, is a smart businessman, but I think he has overestimated his local market's taste for bread and circuses . . . or is it pizza and sports? Throughout Comerica Park's inaugural year, there were plenty of empty seats. This year, the Tigers have taken the almost unheard-of step of lowering ticket prices. Frankly, I think it will take a lot more than that to bring people to downtown Detroit.

Frank Jackson
Dallas, TX

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BOSNIA is the United Nations' first major experiment in nation-building, and the experiences of this multiethnic/multicultural state provide discouraging evidence that the "international community" is no more virtuous or high-minded than the old rogues who governed nation-states. Take the case of Thomas Miller, the United States ambassador in Sarajevo, who is rumored to have conspired a year ago with Milorad Dodik, then prime minister of the Bosnian-Serb Republic, to divert $500,000 of an American aid package to the Gore/Lieberman campaign. This claim, made privately by a former minister in Dodik's government, has been confirmed by another highly placed source in Banja Luka, the capital of the Republika Srpska (RS).

The alleged deal was simple: Last July, Ambassador Miller is said to have arranged a multimillion-dollar USAID grant for the RS budget. Once the money arrived in Banja Luka, half a million was allocated to the prime minister's "discretionary fund"—over which he had exclusive control—and promptly sent back to the United States as his contribution to the Gore/Lieberman campaign. This was not the only payment to a Western political figure from the fund (the existence of which Dodik admitted in a television interview last November), but it was the largest single disbursement. The source insists that Miller was behind the scheme but does not know whether the administration or "Gore's people in Washington" were aware of what was going on: "It is possible that Ambassador Miller arranged it all on his own initiative, because he is a committed Democrat—just like all other key U.S. officials in Bosnia: Jacques Klein, U.N. mission chief in Sarajevo, Ralph Johnson, first deputy high representative, and Robert Berry, OSCE mission chief. They all rooted for Gore, and Miller is known to have expressed his concern for 'the future of Bosnia' if Bush won. And he could not conceal his fury at the outcome of the election dispute in Florida."

When some revelations of Dodik's corrupt practices—including the first partial disclosure of the Gore deal—were published by the Banja Luka magazine *Extra* last February, it looked like the cat was out of the bag. Interestingly, there has been no follow-up. It was widely expected that the new government of Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic would make public the results of an investigation into his predecessor's practices. This has not happened so far, and our sources indicate that Dr. Ivanic is under heavy pressure from Ambassador Miller and other American political heavyweights in Bosnia not to do so.

Their motives are easy to understand. Dodik was *persona gratissima* in Bill Clinton's Washington—Madeleine Albright once described him as "a breath of fresh air"—and the proponents of "continuity" of the U.S. policy in Bosnia want to keep him in reserve as a tried and true quisling. He could come in handy if they are allowed to play the next act in their arcane Balkan game: the scrapping of the Dayton Accord in favor of a centralized Bosnian state. Even after Dodik's crushing defeat at last fall's RS general election, Ambassador Miller was promoting him for a ministerial position at the federal level in Sarajevo. Because Dodik's reputation for greed and graft has made him odious even to the Muslim politicians who had found him useful in the past, he was unsuccessful. In addition, Mr. Miller, a protégé of Richard Holbrooke, may have strong personal reasons for wanting the new RS government to keep quiet about some of Dodik's shenanigans. If the allegations are corroborated, it could mark not only the end of his diplomatic career but the beginning of a criminal investigation once he is back in Washington.

The cover-up may not hold for long, however, because Miller has stepped on too many toes during his tenure. He has openly campaigned for the "non-nationalist" parties in Bosnia's elections and earned the lasting wrath of both Serbs and Croats, who resented his support for the Muslims' preferred model of a centralized Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Serb member of the tripartite Bosnian presidency, Zivko Radisic, even asked for Miller's recall because "his activities in support of his preferred political parties and personalities in Bosnia are incompatible with the proper role of a diplomat." The Croats are equally resentful of Miller in the aftermath of the clampdown by the "international community" on their stronghold in Mostar, which included a raid on the vault of the bank used by their main political party.

Even if the Bosnian Serb government is bullied into silence, our source says that it should be possible to learn the truth about any misuse of USAID funds from Deloitte Touche Tohmantsu (DTT) and KPMG, as those two companies manage the consulting and lending program that makes USAID the largest lender in the RS and Bosnia. Right now, the source claims, DTT is covering up malfeasance in its Bosnian projects: "An effort is under way, sometimes desperate, by DTT to prevent an independent investigation of what is behind observed suspicious behavior in its project. They probably know if the alleged contribution to the Gore campaign has been made, but there is reason to suspect a corrupt connection between the DTT project and Dodik, and to expect that Ambassador Miller will go out of his way to thwart an independent investigation."

If there is a scandal involving foreign aid, it won't be the first since the "international community" started its involvement in post-Dayton Bosnia. In the summer of 1999, the office of the high representative—the U.N. *Gauleiter* in Sarajevo who wields the real power in the hybrid "country"—confirmed that more than one billion dollars had been lost in postwar Bosnia through tax evasion, customs fraud, or embezzlement of public funds. Much of that money was simply stolen from international aid projects, worth over five billion dollars in 1996-1999. Another form of institutionalized corruption involves international bureaucrats who lobby local politicians on behalf of companies from their countries. According to our source in Banja Luka, "The British dominate the so-called Independent Commission for Media, and they swiftly tailored the privatization of the Bosnian television system so that British companies appear as best qualified potential buyers. The Bosnian tsar himself, High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch, tirelessly demands that Austria Telecom be granted the license as the second mobile-phone provider for Bosnia-Herzegovina. His deputy, Ralph Johnson of the United States, is involved in setting up consolidated public utilities for gas and electricity so that they can be sold off more easily to foreign investors who fit his bill. Lower down the scale, foreign bureaucrats—especially

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those from Eastern Europe and the Third World—are involved in large-scale smuggling of American cigarettes that arrive from Montenegro and are then shipped via Bosnia to the European Union."

Foreigners have absolute power in Bosnia. The results were to be expected. As for Ambassador Miller and his crony Milorad Dodik, watch this space.

—Srdja Trifkovic

THE MISSOURI SYNOD of the Lutheran Church (LCMS) is at a crossroads, and not for the reasons most might think. Conservatives and liberals within the 2.6-million-member synod have bickered and postured over their presidential election, held during the 61st synodical convention in July. But another issue of equal significance was not even scheduled for discussion—one that may serve as a sign of the times for the synod known as a bastion of confessional conservatism among Lutherans worldwide.

Lutheran Brotherhood (LB), a Fortune 500 company with $3.2 billion in revenue for the year 2000, is a "fraternal benefit society of 1.2 million Lutheran members joined together for financial security, charitable outreach and volunteer service." LB provides mutual-fund investment opportunities, insurance, and financial planning and distributes its wealth chiefly through funding the building of new Lutheran churches in the United States and abroad. The LCMS is a patron and beneficiary, as is the ELCA, the largest American Lutheran synodical body. Many of the ELCA's members take active roles in LB's corporate leadership. The ELCA officially tolerates abortion, flirts with homosexuals, ordains women, and has entered into union or "pulpit and altar fellowship" with the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Episcopal Church in America, both of which deny the Lutheran formulation of the doctrine of the "Real Presence," a hallmark of Lutheran dogma since the 16th century.

For these and other reasons, the LCMS does not engage in pulpit and altar fellowship with the ELCA. And yet, it seems, financial fellowship is acceptable, provided LB's kindness is doled out for "charitable outreach and volunteer service" upon which all can agree.

Enter LB's annual adolescent essay-writing contest, "RespecTeen." Winners from each state attend an all-expenses-paid National Youth Forum in Washington, D.C., where they are trained to be future lobbyists by learning, according to the *Seattle Times*, "how to better [*sic*] communicate their messages to U.S. senators and representatives."

The 2001 winner from the state of Washington, an eighth-grader named James Humphrey, wrote his congressman, Jennifer Dunn (R-WA), an impassioned essay/letter on the topic of abortion. That might not seem so strange, except that he begs her to lobby for its *permanent legalization*. Why? Because that way, bewildered parents who fear they might be about to give birth to, say, a retarded child, a cripple, or someone who needs expensive "therapy and medication and attention" might eliminate all of that future grief by killing him *in utero*. Nice—especially when we recall that Martin Luther considered contraception a form of sodomy.

Why such a brutal perspective from a 15-year-old? Apparently, James Humphrey's 12-year-old brother, Stephen, has a severe form of autism and must communicate by pointing. He also requires constant supervision. Beaming mother Karen Humphrey adds that Stephen's care amounts to $35,000 each year, but luckily, Jim Senior "is a doctor, and he works long hours to make enough money for all of it." (I'm no economist, but what's the going rate for a D&E, compared to 35 grand each year? And how can you even begin to calculate the cost of round-the-clock supervision?)

"I don't mean my brother never should have been born," Humphrey assured the local press. "He's a great kid." Still, according to Mrs. Humphrey, "we can't take many trips" due to "the difficulty of [Stephen's autism]."

In awe of the blatant eugenicist bent of this award-winning letter, I telephoned Lutheran Brotherhood to try to find out what sort of insanity lay behind the choice of this boy's essay (out of 10,000 submitted). "We pick the winner based on clarity of thought, sincerity, and originality, not based on content," the p.r. lady told me.

"I just don't believe that," I responded. "Let's say the piece had been about pedophilia, instead of abortion. Would you even consider it—even if it were lucid, sincere, and original?"

"I see your point," she said.

I went on to ask her for a list of the judges, which she would not give me. I told her that, as a Missouri Synod Lutheran (the LCMS is officially pro-life), I was offended that my synod is affiliated with an organization that is pouring fuel on the fire of the culture of death. She reminded me that "the Missouri Synod does not control Lutheran Brotherhood—they're just a patron." "Exactly," I responded. "And our synod has a good deal of money at stake that might give it pause about taking a public stand against you."

The nice lady at the LCMS Information Center sounded shocked and dismayed when I called and asked for an official response from the synod. After checking around, she informed me that, while the synod does not approve of the selection, it did not plan to sanction or suspend relations with the organization. "No motion that will go before the delegates at the convention?" I asked. "No," she said, dejected.

Maybe the LCMS should stipulate that each church built with LB money be named Aceldama Lutheran Church, after a certain potter's field purchased with 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 27: 7-9).

—Aaron D. Wolf

THE FUTURE OF CHRISTENDOM, according to the Population Reference Bureau's 2001 annual report, is likely to be pretty bleak. The report's chief conclusion is that population growth in the West has ground to a halt, while the Third World is reproducing like gangbusters. The numbers: "Of the 83 million people added to the global population each year by the difference between births and deaths, only one million are in the industrialized countries." Within the next 50 years, Germany will likely no longer be ranked among the 15 most-populous countries (it's the only European country currently in the top 15), and the population of Russia is expected to drop from 144 million to 137 million. During the same time, Mexico is projected to grow from 100 million to 137 million; Nigeria, from 127 million to 204 million; and Pakistan, from 145 million to 252 million.

Europeans and Americans might be alarmed by the report, but they should not be surprised. Birth rates in the West have been tumbling for the past half-century. The Population Reference Bureau calls this a "natural decrease . . . due both to the low birth rate and to higher proportions of older people in the population."

The report finds that the "United States is now the only industrialized country in the world with a fertility rate at

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or above the 'replacement level' of 2.1 children per woman," but that's hardly a consolation, considering one third of our nation's births are illegitimate. In other words, married couples are not replacing themselves, and a growing illegitimate population is also bad economic news, unless you are among the few who have found a way to profit from an expanding welfare state.

As governments in the West seek to arrest economic decline, they will continue to encourage liberal immigration from the Third World (even as they schizophrenically spend billions to sterilize the world's brown people). Their plan won't work: Peter Brimelow of *VDare.com*, Donald Huddle of Rice University, and plenty of others have exposed the financial costs of open borders. By the time someone in authority recognizes (much less admits) these costs, it will be too late: The West will have become the Third World.

The contraceptive imperialists at International Planned Parenthood and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and the environmentalists at Zero Population Growth and the Sierra Club are two sides of the same coin. Protecting America's wide-open spaces is insufficient reason for a wall with 50-caliber turrets along the border. Preserving American civilization is, but its future can hardly be on the minds of people who refuse to procreate. Love of country is meaningless to a people so steeped in self-loathing that they eat pills to avoid perpetuating their name.

Some honest-to-goodness bleeding hearts undoubtedly bought the pill's empty promises—ranging from greater marital intimacy to fewer abortions. We know today that the opposite is true: Because of the pill and the sexual license it encourages, divorce and abortion have become commonplace and acceptable.

The problem is not permanent, however. Contraceptors, after all, will take care of themselves. As they do, the meek, who have surrendered their lives—and their lineages—to Divine Providence will begin to inherit the earth. It will be up to this remnant of Christianity to evangelize the growing Third World. Doing so may not prove as insurmountable as some might imagine. After all, enough citizens of the Third World are sufficiently meek before their Maker—even those who do not yet know His Name—to appreciate that they ought not interfere with His creative forces.

—*Christopher J. Check*

ALEKSANDR ZHUKOV's April 7 arrest in Sardinia was played up by the Italian DIA (an anti-Mafia investigative unit) as having eliminated an important arms-trafficking channel to the war-torn Balkans. The most intriguing aspect of the story, however, involves NATO, the struggle between Russia and the West for influence in the former Soviet republics, and the role of former Ukrainian Premier Marchuk and the Russian mafia in the affair.

Zhukov, a Russian millionaire with a British passport and residences in Sardinia, London, Kiev, and Tel Aviv, was charged with illegally trafficking arms to the Balkans in the mid-1990's, allegedly using his Sintez corporation and various front companies to reap (and launder) the profits from arms sales to the Croats during their bloody conflict with the Serbs. DIA officials also claim that some of the weapons wound up in the hands of the Italian Mafia.

According to European and Russian press accounts, Zhukov's Sintez company grew out of a *perestroika*-era Soviet cooperative, one that was either founded or co-opted by the KGB to engage in the arms trade, setting up offshore companies to launder the profits, as well as sell crude oil. In fact, Anatoli Fedorenko, an ex-KGB officer from Kiev, and Geza Mezosy, an Hungarian living in Belgium, were arrested last year for their role in the weapons-trade shell game, and DIA spokesmen are now claiming that Fedorenko was the Sintez link to the Solntsevo crime syndicate, one of the most powerful in Russia.

The charges sound plausible: Beginning in the late 80's, the KGB and its successor organizations set up a slew of offshore companies, funneling Communist Party funds abroad as the Soviet Union collapsed around them. Moreover, the KGB, which had long employed the particular talents of Russia's underworld in its "special operations," effectively merged with the emerging post-Soviet crime syndicates, often employing overseas-based front men—like Zhukov—to handle the European end of their various enterprises.

The real bombshell in the whole Zhukov-Sintez affair, however, might be the role of Evgeni Marchuk and NATO's possible collusion in the Balkans arms trade, the ultimate aim of which was the arming of the Croats—and the defeat of the West's chosen bad guys, the Serbs. Marchuk—a one-time KGB general, founder of independent Ukraine's intelligence service, and former Ukrainian premier and current security council secretary—was allegedly the operation's Ukrainian cover. The weapons originated in Ukraine and Belarus and were funneled by Sintez and its front companies to the Balkans via Italy, after being stored, according to Italian press sources, at a NATO installation on Sardinia. For the record, Marchuk has been a proponent of Ukrainian cooperation with the West, even as Russia courted politically vulnerable Ukrainian President Kuchma.

In view of NATO's stated intention to expand eastward over Russia's protests and the West's determination to crush the Serbs and weaken Russian influence in both the Balkans and the former Soviet republics, Western journalists should be interested in following this trail further. So far, they haven't. Did NATO collude with organized-crime syndicates in illegal arms sales? Was Marchuk effectively NATO's agent and partner? The West's media watchdogs don't seem to care.

—*Denis Petrov*

OBITER DICTA: As we go to press, Lutheran Brotherhood has announced that, because of the concerns of its members, it will no longer sponsor the RespecTeen contest discussed by **Aaron D. Wolf** in his *Cultural Revolutions* this month.

Paul Lake, who teaches English and creative writing at Arkansas Tech, has contributed two poems to this issue. His second collection of poetry, *Walking Backward*, was released by Story Line Press. The author of *The Measured Word: Essays on Poetry and Science* (University of Georgia Press), Mr. Lake has published poems in the *Formalist*, the *Hudson Review*, the *Sewanee Review*, and the *Paris Review*, among others.

Our art this month is provided by **Earl Keleny** of Madison, Wisconsin, whose other clients have included *Barron's*, American Airlines, Simon & Schuster, the Franklin Library, *Newsweek*, and Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey. An extensive portfolio of his work can be found at *www.earlkeleny.com*.

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[I]t is because the Serbians have been warlike that we have found it possible to be peaceful. If they are fierce it is because no courage short of sheer fanaticism could have kept the frontiers of Christendom against such locust-clouds of foes, while we were electing our first parliaments and building our first cathedrals. While all that we call the world was being made they were the wall of the world . . .
—G.K. Chesterton

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"Wasted Away Again in Margaritaville"

by Thomas Fleming

The arrest of the 19-year-old Bush twins for drinking liquor in an Austin restaurant gave the news-starved (and starved-brained) press something to cackle over. The girls, clearly in a state of arrested adolescent rebellion, checked their Secret Service agents at the door and, even after the restaurant rejected Jenna's fake ID, succeeded in getting their (what else?) margaritas. Compounding the "irony" is the fact that their father, as governor of Texas, had signed into law the zero-tolerance standard on underage drinking. "A chip off the old block," the bolder pundits were saying on talk shows, and a telling refutation of the fine parental principle, "Do as I say, not as I do."

Irony aside, the girls' legal and moral problems raise a deeper concern. Americans are apparently horrified to discover that many college girls drink and that some of them occasionally drink too much. I, too, am disgusted to see young women ordering drinks and making fools of themselves as if they were young men. A long time ago in *Lanterns on the Levee*, Will Percy correctly predicted the fall of American civilization, based on his observation of nice young women drinking away their inhibitions in public places.

Alcohol *per se* is not the problem. Because of certain well-known differences between the sexes, young women have a duty never to fall under the control of young men, whether as a result of drinking too much or merely from infatuation. Most women should not drink cocktails (except for the occasional drink to keep their husbands company); they lack the talent and stamina for the work, and if they acquire the skill, they lose a great deal more than they gain.

But there is absolutely nothing wrong in a young woman drinking wine with her family, and the very foolish campaign against drinking that puritans have inflicted on this poor savage land for a hundred years has done a great deal of damage. Italian children grow up drinking wine with their families, and (by and large) Italian college students display better discretion than Jenna and Barbara Bush have demonstrated. I frequently observe Italian families in restaurants, especially on Sunday afternoons, serving a little wine (often mixed with water) even to fairly young children, who appear to suffer no ill effects. Where did people ever get the idea that it was government's business to tell parents what they could give their children to drink? They got it, of course, from the same New Englanders who liberated all slaves (including wives and children), excommunicated the Trinity from American soil, and, in the name of individual liberty, extinguished both individualism and liberty. The Bush girls are Cotton Mather's revenge on their father's Yankee ancestors.

I am not at all sure that we need the government to impose any regulation of alcohol—apart from setting standards of purity, strength, and enforcing laws on correct labeling. "Oh, but how are we going to control drunk driving?" Another bugbear. The law is supposed to punish criminal behavior and even criminal intent. Since when is the law supposed to punish you for a physiological condition? Suppose, for example, that we repealed every law limiting blood-alcohol content and replaced them with appropriate laws against people whose reckless behavior has caused destruction of property, injury, and death? Suppose, for example, that a man over 21 gets drunk and drives into a parked car. The damage is, say, $5,000. Of course, he or his insurance company pay for the repair; in addition, however, he is treated as if he had, stone sober in the cold light of day, taken a sledgehammer and smashed up the vehicle. He should certainly do time for such wanton destruction, and if, six months after his release from the county work farm, he got drunk again and killed somebody, then a charge of first-degree murder would settle accounts nicely. A few well-publicized jail sentences—and executions—would, I suspect, do more than all the laws, driver-safety courses, and 12-step programs in the world.

We modern Americans, by contrast, are completely irrational: We no longer believe in justice, and while we refuse to execute murderers and child-molesters, we demonize conditions like alcohol in the blood or prejudice in the mind. Since we have eliminated manners from our public life (and since smokers are boorish enough to inflict their smoke on others), we cannot politely ask someone sitting next to us in a restaurant not to smoke, and so we have instituted elaborate legal codes that demonize even the politest of smokers. In our favorite local restaurant (the Irish Rose), my wife and I—confirmed non-smokers (except for my occasional cigar)—always sit in the smoking section because the smokers are having more fun. I don't like smoke—it is annoying and causes my eyelids to swell up—but I positively *hate* the anti-smokers. I certainly would not drink with them.

Drinking is a social art, circumscribed by rituals and codes of manners. Wine and beer are not drugs, whose sole purpose is to destroy our capacity for civilized life. They are a vital part of civilization itself, and the widespread acceptance of the equation "alcohol = heroin" (or cocaine or even marijuana) reveals how few civilized people are left. Blue laws are often blamed on religion, but—and I am putting this as delicately as I can—prohibitionism is inconsistent with authentic Christianity: Our Lord not only set the example, in changing water to wine, but He sanctified wine as a means of summoning His presence. Besides, the whole moral bias of Christianity is against the kill-joy meddling of pharisees, scribes, and puritans. It was not Catholic New Orleans or Protestant Illinois but the post-Puritan, ex-Christian state of Maine that blazed the trail by prohibiting alcohol before the War Between the States.

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It is not merely that puritans are mistaken (which they are), or that they deliberately and perversely misinterpret Scripture (which they do), but that they set themselves up as self-made gods in opposition to the moral freedom we enjoy as followers of Christ and members of His Church. If they do not wish to drink wine (except, of course, in communion, where it is required of all Christians), no one will force them, but their desire to regulate other people's conduct and other people's children reminds me of the little girl in the children's story: She lay awake every Christmas Eve, frustrated because none of the church clocks in her town struck midnight at the right time—that is, when her bedside clock chimed 12.

Of course, there is a moral law that society is supposed to enforce, and that moral law may quite justly include prohibitions on adultery, on seduction of the innocent, on pornographic displays, and on public drunkenness, and it is not quite true to say that society's interest in morals stops at the threshold of a private home. If my neighbor spends his life watching films that celebrate the rape and murder of little girls, the fathers in the neighborhood (or, in a civilized society, the "forces of public order") may well decide to drive him out of town. And if my neighbor decides to practice polygamy, against the laws of God and the state of Illinois, he should not be surprised if the men whose wives, sisters, and daughters he is preying upon make a vigorous attempt to enforce the moral law.

But wine (and the occasional dry martini, preferably with gin straight up and served perhaps, if you are hungry, with a cheese-stuffed olive) is neither a crime nor a vice. As the Greeks have told us, wine encourages truth, warms our friendship, and, as Homer says, "lifts up the courage of a man wearied from battle." It is a normal part of our Western experience, celebrated in our literature and art, integrated into the rituals of our religion, and intimately bound up with the lesser rituals of wedding parties and wakes, birthdays and Christmas dinners, and my upcoming 30th anniversary when I intend to break my personal rule against drinking champagne.

Our pernicious obsession with regulating other people's private lives stems, in part, from what Edgar Lee Masters called our "Hebraic Puritanism," but it is even more the product of the bad moral philosophies of John Locke and Immanuel Kant, who emphasized rationality and duty at the expense of personal attachment and sound character. For liberal philosophers of nearly every school, morality is reduced to abstract calculations of right and wrong, carried out by human beings who deny their own inclinations in order to do what they know is right.

This theory, which is contradicted as much by our intuition as by the observable facts of human life, has led to pernicious consequences. Duty and reason, obviously, play a part in the moral life of men and women, but so do non-rational affections such as friendship, love, respect, personal honor, loyalty, and patriotism. If the security of our lives and property depended upon our neighbor's grasp of the Categorical Imperative, we might just as well live in New York City.

The Hebrew Scriptures nowhere teach the abstract and meddlesome morality of modern puritans who presume to know how to rear other people's children. Jewish tradition, as much as the Greek, Roman, and Christian traditions, teaches respect for the family and for the community. In fact, every sensible person in all the traditions that converge upon the West understood that the family was the nursery both of personal morality and of the civic-mindedness on which the institutions of our common life depend.

It is, after all, within the family home that children learn to be good, not simply by listening to parental admonitions or by reading the Ten Commandments on a refrigerator magnet. Good character is the result of good habits, and good habits—for most of us—depend upon the hypocrisy of pretending to be good by doing good things—in other words, on manners. "Politeness," wrote Thomas Jefferson to a young kinsman, "is artificial good humor; it covers the natural want of it, and ends by rendering habitual a substitute equivalent to the real virtue."

"Would you like some more mashed rutabaga?" asks the father who has read his Jefferson. "No," replies the sulky child who has not. "No, what?" demands the father. "No, thank you," the sulky child hisses between his teeth. "No, thank you *what*?" insists the obstinate parent. "No, thank you, sir," declares the little victim of this lesson in deportment, wondering to himself, "Why won't they leave me alone to be myself?" What the father does not tell the child until he is much older is that "being yourself" means remaining not merely an animal, but a feral beast, an animal supposed to be domesticated but allowed to run wild and become a plague to the human beings he is supposed to serve.

The problem with the President's charming daughters is not that they drink or lack discretion, but that they seem to care so little for their father's happiness. The irrepressible Vlad Zhirinovsky, hardly a model gentleman, wrote the girls to tell them to behave themselves and not add to their father's burdens. It is good advice from an unlikely source, but even a Zhirinovsky seems to grasp the obvious connection between morals and manners.

Fine manners are an aristocratic accomplishment, but peasants and merchants also used to live by complex codes of behavior that take some of the sting out of the everyday life in which our sensibilities are buffeted and pummeled by friends and family (to say nothing of strangers and enemies) until we begin to envy hermits. A pleasantly spoken "excuse me" or "you're welcome" sugarcoats the bitter pill of life, and "yes, sir," uttered by a son or junior colleague is a reassurance (probably false) that the old man has not lived entirely in vain.

Ultimately, all forms of courtesy are an implied recognition that other people exist, that they may even be doing the best they can in making their way through the world. Bad manners (or, what is most common in America, no manners at all) are a way of telling people, "Watch out, world; here I come, and if you know what's good for you, you'll get out of the way." If a gentleman never unintentionally gives offense, what word can we use for people who act as if the world belonged to them and they did not care how they abused their own property? They are not ladies and gentlemen, certainly, but neither are they peasants or bourgeois or even workers. They are, I suppose, mere proletarians, human bodies used to fulfill purposes about which they have no clue. This is the real effect of socialism in America, not the distortions of the market or even the intrusion of government into private life. Marx, whose bad manners matched his morality, is probably looking up at America from his corner of Hell at this very moment, pleased with what he and his liberal and socialist allies have made out of the once-decent American peasantry. If prohibitionism is un-Christian, the least we can say of American manners, since the socialist revolutions of the 1930's and 1960's, is that they are increasingly inhuman.

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National Endowments

by Paul Lake

From courtly Maecenas
Horace received
A rich Sabine farm
Peopled by slaves.
Silver-tongued Virgil
Praised
Caesar Augustus, Rome's
Far flung empire, and grew
Epic in fame.

Light-hearted Ovid
Knew
Boredom and sorrow
First hand,
For a few
Indelicate words, dying
Unreconciled
To imperial power
In a rude and
Barbarous land.

One hint of disgust in
An age's corruption
Brings exile and shame.

Even in this
Less than Augustan
Age, dangers abound.

Think what such patronage
Costs, then,
Before courting states.

Think what Maecenas bestows
Along with those green estates.

DICTATIONS

"Call Me Irresponsible"

"This is really a matter of accountability," snarled Tom Daschle on *Fox News Sunday*, "making sure that we can enforce the rights we're now going to guarantee and that we hold everybody accountable." In his superbly inarticulate way, Daschle was telling the truth for a change. First, you invent a right—in this case, the right of HMO patients to see a specialist, regardless of cost, whether they need it or not—and then the government proceeds to "enforce the rights we're now going to guarantee." The outcome is that "we hold everybody accountable." By everybody, Daschle means insurance companies and physicians, not the congressmen who continue to undermine the economy and destroy institutions while pocketing bribes—I mean, "campaign contributions"—from interest groups.

"Accountability" is one of the many weasel words in American English that immediately give notice that the politician or bureaucrat or journalist is about to tell a whopper he has been paid to tell. "Responsibility" implied that someone actually had to answer for his conduct, so a vaguer term had to be imported from (what else?) accounting. Derived by way of French from the Late Latin word meaning "a reckoning," "account" comes from the Latin *computare*—to count or reckon up—from the verb *puto*, which commonly refers to the act of considering or thinking but is apparently derived from the same root as "pure" and originally used to describe such actions as cleaning and pruning.

An "account" is a formal calculation of monies spent and monies owed. To *call someone to account* is to tell him to pay what he owes, and this is also the sense of holding someone "accountable." Thus, "accountability" implies that there is a debt to be paid. But bureaucrats, whether they work for government agencies or semiprivate HMOs, are—like politicians and journalists—rarely held accountable for their crimes, much less for their mistakes. When Bill O'Reilly asked Trent Lott if he intended to hold hearings on how former Education Secretary Richard Riley misspent millions of dollars raised to carry out the reform of education he had promised, Senator Lott acted as if he did not know what O'Reilly was talking about, declaring sententiously that we need "more accountability" in education.

The fuzziness comes, in part, from the misuse of "accountability" by cult groups like Promise Keepers, which create small groups designed to "bear one another's burdens" and to "hold each other accountable." A Christian *is* obliged to bear his brother's burden, but these sects so redistribute responsibility as to make it a meaningless term—a flight from duty, a denial of individual human dignity, one more ant in the socialist hill that is owned and operated for the benefit of people like the Senate majority leaders of both parties.

—*Humpty Dumpty*

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Missed Manners and Creeping Laws

by Philip Jenkins

Earl Keleny

All societies regulate personal behavior: That is part of what makes them societies, instead of mere aggregations of isolated individuals. Societies differ enormously, though, in just *how* they perform this regulation, how much they rely on law and the state, rather than informal or private means. If I walk into a crowded room wearing a Cat-in-the-Hat hat, people will laugh, since laughter is a powerful means of social sanction, an informal way of telling me my actions are deviant. If I am wearing nothing but said hat, people may still laugh, but additional sanctions will be imposed in the form of arrest, trial, and criminal punishment. All societies have extreme sanctions that they can levy against personal behavior that is seen as threatening. What has been unusual in recent years about the United States, and many of its European clones, is the tendency to extend official public sanctions to activities that, not too long ago, were viewed as private. Instead of unofficial sanctions (such as saying, "Did you hear what he did? What a *jerk*"), we move all too quickly to the realm of law, where the merely obnoxious and offensive becomes criminal. As American criminologist Raymond B. Fosdick lamented back in 1920, "We are of all people, not excepting the Germans, pre-eminently addicted to the habit of standardizing by law, the lives and morals of our citizens. . . . We like to pass laws compelling the individual to do what we think he ought to do for his own good." If anything, the addiction has grown worse since Fosdick's time, with the expansion of criminal law to regulate interracial relations, sexual harassment, even smoking. As the realm that was once subject only to good manners shrinks, the state happily expands to fill the void, usually with announced goals that sound just wonderful: Who would say a word against tolerance and social harmony, the legislation of civility?

In most Western societies, historically, the official criminal law covers a far smaller area of life than most of us realize. Before the rise of formal police systems in the 18th and 19th centuries, a huge amount of interpersonal behavior was regulated by quite elaborate community-based mechanisms that did not invoke the assistance of courts or the state. Since these informal mechanisms by definition were not recorded in elaborately filed documents, historians generally know little about them and, therefore, write as if they did not exist. But literary evidence tells us of events like the "love-days" that were commonplace in medieval and early-modern England, when communities would gather periodically to resolve rows, feuds, and disputes, dealing with matters as serious as murder and abduction. In some European societies, the Church organized special ceremonies to reconcile rivals, to make them swear to abjure violence in the future, and even promise to love each other. On a somewhat comical note, when modern historian John Boswell found puzzling records of these rituals, he believed that he had found the liturgies of Church-approved same-sex unions, or gay marriages, and he wrote a much-discussed book presenting this utterly wrongheaded view. In reality, the Church was just consecrating something the community thought its proper role, namely, maintaining social peace between people and families without involving kings, judges, or lawyers.

Love-days were long-forgotten by the 19th and 20th centuries, but for most of that period, the law had nothing like the expansive ambitions that it has today. Of course, the community still regulated what people could say and do, but generally, it did so by informal customs, the network of boundaries and sanctions that we can loosely call "manners." Now, to talk about the manners and proprieties of bygone ages is to suggest an elaborate charade of hypocrisy designed to provide a decep-

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Philip Jenkins is the author, most recently, of Hidden Gospels: How the Quest for Jesus Lost Its Way *(Oxford University Press, 2001).*

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tive veneer to a society founded upon brutality and exploitation: insisting that people choose the correct fork for dinner while people were being lynched outside. A good case can be made, though, that appeals to manners had at least as much of an effect as law in improving people's lives, in extending their life-chances. I think, for instance, of Mark Twain's commentary on the Chinese of California and the American West in *Roughing It*, where his most powerful argument for treating this "kindly-disposed, well-meaning race" with the respect and decency they deserved is that this behavior is an essential part of good manners. The Chinese, he wrote, "are respected and well treated by the upper classes, all over the Pacific coast. No Californian gentleman or lady ever abuses or oppresses a Chinaman, under any circumstances, an explanation that seems to be much needed in the East. Only the scum of the population do it—they and their children." Manners mattered, manners shaped behavior, and the sense that you were behaving like a gentleman or lady was a potent sanction against wrongdoing. As in this instance, a sense of civility and manners helped begin the eradication of casual racism in American life: As Twain was asking his compatriots, do you really want to act like scum?

This notion of civility may seem like a luxury for a tiny elite of the well-to-do, but we should never underestimate the enormous power of social emulation, the desire to act like your social betters. Between the mid-19th and mid-20th century, the spread of these ideas of manners, the ideology of a gentleman or lady, had an incalculable effect in the civilizing of American society, long before the law could do anything in this regard. In no particular order of priority, these notions of civility and good behavior assured that lynching was confined to the extreme backwoods and byways of America. They transformed ideas of appropriate sexual behavior and spread the notion that a man who beat or demeaned his wife was a brute unfit for civilized company, as was a persistent wolf, groper, or lecher. Ideals of civility helped to transform American interpersonal conflicts, minimizing such traditional horrors as the knife-fight and the eye-gouging contest. They taught generations of Americans that, while being drunk occasionally was acceptable, the proper behavior in this condition was humorous stupidity, not boorish aggression, much less violence directed against the weak. A social revolution in American life had been accomplished long before World War II, without benefit of law.

It is useful to stress all this in view of the currently popular view of what the American past was like before the blessings of sexual-harassment law, hate-crime protections, and other recent legal panaceas. I am exaggerating somewhat, of course, but most of our college students seem to imagine the America of the 1950's as an age of daily lynchings, a time when no woman was safe from casual rape and the nighttime streets were lit by the carcasses of burning homosexuals and communists. I am not exaggerating when I point out that most Northerners confidently believe that the word "nigger" was freely used by all residents of Southern states before 1970 or even later. They refuse to believe that it had been many years since anyone with the slightest pretensions to decency, civility, or manners would have used such a word. To adapt Twain's *Roughing It* once more, the word was the preserve of the scum, "they, and, naturally and consistently, the policemen and politicians, likewise, for these are the dust-licking pimps and slaves of the scum, there as well as elsewhere in America."

To understand the process of historical falsification so busily at work in our textbooks and in the popular media, we must appreciate how emerging interest groups project their ideas in a society like ours. Primarily, they must show that there is a grievance that cannot be accommodated within the existing society and which, therefore, requires some kind of legislative change to serve as a landmark of the group's success. In order to justify this legislation, it has to be shown that the state needs to intervene to achieve those things that could not be done by manners alone, by the natural evolution of standards within culture and community. The past must thus be painted in the grimmest possible terms, ignoring or understating the real progress that had occurred and was occurring. Once legislation passes, it has a natural tendency toward "legislation creep," the expansion of law into matters once regulated by informal controls. There is no law so well written that it cannot be stretched beyond the bounds of absurdity, and laws designed to order people how to live together in civility are anything but well written.

Sexual-harassment legislation offers a classic example here. During the 1970's, the emerging feminist movement made rape one of its central themes, an issue as momentous as lynching was for civil-rights groups. Once rape legislation was changed across the country, new areas of concern had to be identified, and this meant the discovery of both child sexual abuse and sexual harassment. Harassment was a particularly tempting target in an age when millions more women were entering the workplace and struggling to define appropriate boundaries with male colleagues. Everyone agreed, moreover, that harassment was wrong, at least in the terms in which this misconduct was defined in the mid 1980's—namely, a form of extortion in which your job prospects could be advanced by trading sexual favors. (Harassment in these terms had been recognized and condemned as a social problem for decades, not least in the 1940's, the age of Rosie the Riveter.) But once harassment was brought into the realm of law, the declared scope of the problem began metastasizing beyond all recognition. Harassment ceased to mean sleazy extortion and became a thoroughly ill-focused term suggesting generalized bias or sexual innuendo in the workplace. Ill-focused, unspecific, and hard to disprove: In short, harassment was lawyers' heaven.

This rhetorical inflation is not unique to sexual relationships. We can see obvious parallels in the devaluation of the concept of "hate crime" over the last decade or so, from cross-burning to the speaking of bad words and, increasingly, to the expression of unpopular (but nonracist) opinions. How long will it be before it is declared a hate crime to oppose reparations for slavery, or to challenge the propriety of gay marriages? Quite possibly, I suppose, by the time this issue of *Chronicles* has gone to press.

What these diverse examples illustrate is a subtle but perilous shifting of usage that indicates a fundamental change in the concept of government and the state. Interest groups are demanding that the *community* must intervene to effect certain changes, and that the only acceptable form for this action is legislation by the *state*. The state, it seems, is the community, the community is the state, and only the state can declare how standards are to be shaped. The notion is dangerous, and not just for the reasons outlined above. At present, it is possible to be an enthusiastic member of the community, of the society, while detesting the government and all its works; in the new formulation, however, to oppose the state and its laws is, perforce, to challenge the community, to reject society. One becomes—to borrow a term from other nations that have explored these concepts in richer detail—an Enemy of the People. c

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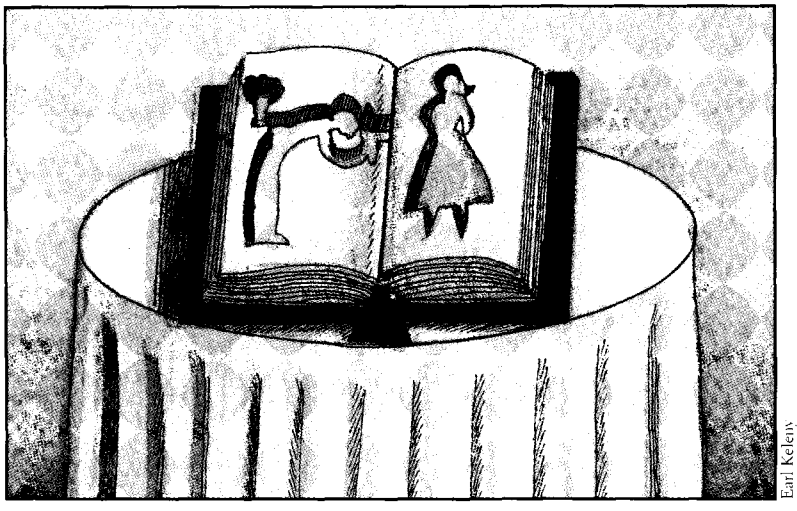
Never Mind Your Manners

by J.O. Tate



Earl Kelley

Having been invited to address the topic of manners, I can only do so with a certain embarrassment, for I have been known to have behaved deplorably. Indeed, I was once even called "reprehensible" by a woman of repellent aspect, remotely connected with education, but, all things considered, I felt more honored than not. I consoled myself with the unvoiced reflection, *If I thought my thumbs could ever find the windpipe somewhere deeply buried in the wattles of your bloated neck, incredibly large person, I'd show you something "reprehensible."* But having been at fault on occasions all too numerous has taught me a few things, such as not to insult anyone unintentionally; not to lose my composure; and not to telegraph a punch. You know, experience counts for a lot. And so does theory.

Now, when the subject of manners comes up, I can only say that I know good manners when I see them, because I have indeed seen them, though not so much in the last 40 years. I do not claim any other authority on the topic, but perhaps I can begin by saying that I at least hope we are cured today of the romantic disgust that many have felt for Lord Chesterfield's letters to his son. In our own time, J.P. Donleavy has written brilliantly on manners. In general, we need to get back to traditional standards in order to recover some reason, dignity, and peace, but things are not looking propitious. Specifically, I would like to see a revival of dueling, but that would be too much to hope for.

What we need today, and what we are not going to get, is a return to the 18th century, at least to understand the truth of Rochefoucauld's maxim that hypocrisy is the tribute that vice pays to virtue. Such a tribute is no bad thing. An examination of the etymologies of *person* and *hypocrisy* is most instructive, striking at many of our modern vanities and illusions. Reading, as I did the other day, that Hollywood films have "revealed social hypocrisy" is to suffer a temporary vertigo. Society is hypocritical by definition, as humans always knew until Rousseau and Rameau's nephew; and the arrogance, greed, and coarseness of Hollywood have hardly been a basis for any revelation. Even if they had been, the illusion of film and of contrived scenes only confirm—they do not deny—the ancient wisdom that all the world's a stage.

Shakespeare was certainly not the first to give voice to that insight, but he developed it as no other has done. I have always thought that Hamlet's paradoxically rude injunction to his mother—"Assume a virtue, if you have it not"—was sage advice. Hamlet recommended hypocrisy, and this is in a play with a play within the play, to cite only one of many paradoxes. Hamlet's manners are mostly bad—at Ophelia's funeral, unforgivable—but noble in the end. Horatio is a gentleman. Claudius's manners are deceptive (when they are not gross). Osric is a fop, a travesty of good manners. And Polonius is justly slain for his meddling and, above all, for talking too much.

I suppose that, when we think of manners, we think of literature, because that is where we see manners fixed—manners as character, as in 18th-century comedy, and as in such novels as those of Jane Austen. That toady, the Rev. Mr. Collins, and his esteemed patroness, the odious Lady Catherine De Bourgh, are unforgettable, as Austen brilliantly renegotiated the meanings of class and manners in her time. That heap of infamy, Uriah Heep, pretended clumsily and villainously to good manners above his station, as melodramatically imagined by Dickens. But by the time of Dickens, the rot had already set in. That great romantic hero, Heathcliff, was significantly ill bred, unkempt, and rude. Emily Brontë, more than Dickens, admired "sincerity" and "passion" all too well, with sinister long-range implications. Thackeray spent his career examining the mean-

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ing of good manners and gentlemanliness, with mixed results. The end of the road, I suppose, was D.H. Lawrence, and the sick charade of Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier*.

The American tradition of manners has always been rough—perhaps because of the frontier, and perhaps even more because of resentment of class distinctions. The results have not always been pretty. We are not taught to remember the Tories as gentlemen today, though perhaps we should. Fictionally, if not in fact, we have rooted for stout Brom Bones to drive out the bookish Ichabod Crane. Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett, whatever their virtues, are an unlikely pair of heroes. In the national mythology, there was once an obsession with the idea of the gentleman, particularly the Virginia gentleman. We have documented reasons for believing that the Virginia gentleman existed, as in the language and behavior of Robert E. Lee, for example. The correspondence of the young A.P. Hill (from Culpepper, Virginia) with George B. McClellan regarding the proprieties of their conflict over the courtship of a young lady is highly suggestive, coming from two future generals in the Civil War. When Hill was in his grave, McClellan said of the man who had competed for his wife's hand, and who had attacked his army ferociously during the Peninsular Campaign and at Antietam, that he was a gallant soldier and a gentleman. But the ideal of the Southern gentleman (not to mention such Northern ones as Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain and Winfield Scott Hancock) has long since been discredited in the minds of those who did not feel that theft, arson, and pillage in any way marred what their eyes had seen: the glory of the coming of the Lord. He works in mysterious ways. The fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword included stealing the wedding rings off corpses exhumed for the purpose, but enough of this unpleasantness. Let us just try to be grateful, shall we?

So there is a tradition of good manners to fall back on, from Europe and even from our own history. What do we know about good manners? Good manners are, by definition, harmonious with good sense and good taste, and should not need elaborate cultivation. Good manners are always effortless, as Castiglione would have it. Good manners are never mannered, because that is to call attention to oneself and one's affectations, which themselves are usually signs of insecurity or new money. My father liked to point out that, when Winston Churchill declared war on Germany in a letter to Hitler, he signed off as "Your obedient servant." To that point I would add, however, that Churchill, like Dr. Johnson, is also remembered for certain ungentlemanly moments, and he can hardly be faulted for those. He lived in the 20th century with the Labour Party, so what do you expect?

The truth is that we have a difficulty in our country today, and have had for a long time, with good manners: They have largely been discarded. James Fenimore Cooper had a lot to say about this in *The American Democrat*, and so did the Adams brothers later on. The implications of "democracy" were clear: Scruples are for losers. Was it not Jay Gould who once declared, after some speculative fiasco, "Nothing is lost, save honor"? The statement speaks volumes, and that was well over a century ago.

In the realm of popular culture, as an inheritance of Victorian melodrama and through Hollywood, we have long since been inured to regarding a man who speaks precisely and wears a suit as a villain. Various roles of Basil Rathbone, Clifton Webb, George Macready, Ray Milland, James Mason, and others prove the point, which is that good manners, if reinforced with the slightest claim to authority, are the sign of an evil disposition. The mean old banker will foreclose on the widow, but the nice (though unwashed and ill-clad) ranchhand will save the farm and little Lindy Lou. The point is a demographic one: There were not enough crooked lawyers to fill the seats, even a hundred or 50 years ago. Nowadays, of course, I would like to meet a crooked lawyer in a dark, pinstriped banker suit, because that would be such a refreshing change; but then again, I do not live anywhere near Washington, D.C.

Since the days of corny villains, there has intervened a new dispensation, which perhaps began when Marlon Brando undertook the role of Stanley Kowalski in 1947. Say what you like, but old Marlon was all too successful. The revelation of "truth" by way of violence and, what is worse, bad manners set a ruinous course for the last half of the 20th century. We have long been inured to misreading Tennessee Williams' play, to accepting yelling as a revelation of deep feeling, and to believing that the lower strata of society constitute a source of moral instruction. In rapid order, after the actors mumbled in their T-shirts and Elvis Presley gyrated his hips, we had the civil-rights movement, which, its legitimate goals notwithstanding, sanctioned not only the disruption of public order but the principle that the disenfranchised, the aggrieved, and the young always know better about everything. We have had the feminist movement, which, aping its predecessor, established gross truculence as an argument and as a model of femininity, as the image of Molly Yard, roaring and shaking her fist like Mussolini, attests. And we have had the "gay-rights movement," which celebrates its foundation in a 1969 riot at the Stonewall Inn, which has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places, as Bill Clinton made sure to point out.

The images of manners in popular culture today are only too well known, but perhaps I can cite a few of the more annoying codes. For males: Never stand up straight, sit up straight, or wear real clothes. Giggle and smirk a lot. Never tuck shirt in. Neglect haircut, shave, and education. Mumble leeringly and make constant jokes about contraception. For females: Display navel, with or without ring. Appear to invite immediate sexual assault by provocative slut-talk and stylish state of undress. Giggle leeringly about contraception and AIDS prevention. Cite equality of "genders" in all exchanges. Only meeting polite and composed people, which we sometimes unaccountably do, can prevent us from despairing as we behold the degraded images offered to us in the media and in "reality" as well.

Yes, thinking about bad manners is more fun than defining good manners, so perhaps we should cite some negative examples. I do not want to go out on a limb, but I do think there are some things that are simply "not done"—which means, in our world, that they are routine. I am not going to say that you should not talk with your mouth full or that you should keep your elbows off the table. May I suggest, however, that giving your word is something to abide by? The repudiation of agreements freely entered into, followed by bald-faced lying about it, is a phenomenon I now find less baffling than I did formerly, having experienced it so many times, but I hasten to say that such a thing does not happen in the academic world exclusively. I thought effrontery had topped itself when one liar I called to account suggested that I must be having mental problems. Well, he had me there: My mental problem was that I had a memory. I have actually known such things to happen in the real world, and from editors in Manhattan, three times. One of

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them invited me to come see him, and then abandoned the appointment, for which I had traveled many miles, on the grounds that he had a superior immediate opportunity. Another invited me to talk to him and then dismissed me as though I had not been asked to be there. A third (I do not remember him and there is no reason why I should, but he was some sort of British twit) insulted me while I shook his hand, at a reception to which I had been invited to meet him. Thus, I began to get the picture about the social code of Manhattan, which is superior to that of the rest of the country, as we have been so often informed.

Speaking of Manhattan, I must also say that some of the finest gentlemen I have known lived there. Lionel Trilling, Mark Van Doren, and William F. Buckley, Jr., come immediately to mind. Another gentleman, Bassett Hough, a professor at Barnard, disappointed me a little bit when I found out he was originally from Virginia, as I should have surmised. I was more than disappointed later on when, as he was on his way to play the organ at a church service, he was murdered for the lunch money he had in his pocket. Such an outrage seemed the destiny of an old gentleman in such a world.

But we cannot neglect the ladies, for they are one of the reasons for good manners, and they sustain them by their own example. My maternal grandmother, Mary Ligon Cason, was a lady who not only had excellent manners but much humor and a good heart to go with them. Her generosity to people of all stations is something I have never forgotten. The late Sally Fitzgerald was also a great lady of the old school, and I was glad to learn that she was from Texas, not from Massachusetts. (It figured.) Priscilla Buckley, whom I met a few times in New York, has always been known as a lady of impeccable manners, and her gracious presence is enough to make a day. Of course, I have named these three as exceptions.

The collapse of manners in the last two generations has been so widespread that it has actually masked a shift even more sinister than ugly clothes, ugly music, and ugly tones. The feminist motto that the personal is the political is not only wrong but wicked, and it speaks directly to the death of much that makes life worth living, which is, of course, why it was instituted. The breakdown of the distinction between the public and the private is an expression of the politicization of individual exchange, of the invasion of ideology into hitherto privileged spheres and spaces. The worst infractions of good manners I have known have been inquisitions at private gatherings—investigations of political correctness disguised as "conversation." Political examinations have largely taken over the place formerly reserved for social exchanges, as I have seen many times. There was the late professor of psychology who announced to me abruptly, "I'm glad Clinton was elected. There will be more abortions, and that's good." I once attended a large dinner party for various academics at which the unannounced agenda, one I had somehow failed to intuit, was literally, "What can we do to reelect Bill Clinton and protect reproductive rights?" The delightful five-hour discussion that followed was so exasperating that I had great provocation but little need to suggest that various professors and their wives depart for the infernal regions immediately, and not wait for the dessert course, because we were already there. I realized that sometimes it feels good to be a bad boy. Come to think of it, today it almost *always* does. There comes a point when good manners have to be dispensed with, and to me that point can be identified when Satanism, tricked out with silverware and napkins and shrimp on the barbie and every amenity except the one that matters, is presented as good manners.

Only in the context of a code of manners, however distantly remembered, is it possible meaningfully to say, on occasions that are not hard to imagine, "Does your mother know who your father was yet?" or "Why don't we continue this discussion outside?" or, more positively, "Why, there's nothing I'd like better than to chaperone the gay prom—I thought you'd never ask!" And finally, let us remember that a great social philosopher once indicated that the hangman is the foundation of the state. Our ultimate Emily Post or Miss Manners is the cop on the block or in the cruiser. The temptation to take justice into your own hands and to seek the immediate satisfaction of personal honor is best addressed by the reflection that the cops pack heat. And, after all, who do you think would be sitting on any hypothetical jury, if you survived to be arrested? In a world of inverted values in which rage and resentment are institutionalized, and in which the ideological chip on the shoulder is permanently installed as everyone pursues a spurious "equality," we can hardly expect anything better than what we have. In a mass democracy such as ours, except for admirable individuals and nostalgic rituals, there can be no manners but bad ones. c

Pro Forma

by Paul Lake

Certain poets, whose measures don't seem to conform
To any known pattern, when pressed, will explain,
They're not tin-eared bards when they veer from the norm;
If their meters don't scan and their rhymes crack and strain,
It's not that the rhyme scheme's too hard to maintain—
When their sonnet falls short a few lines, their refrain
Is to sing out in chorus, "The rules don't obtain!
I'm a clever young artist subverting the form!"

Likewise, when a contractor building a dorm
Fails to bolt metal cross beams or hammer in nails
And the floors start to buckle like ships in a storm
Then collapse, crushing hundreds; though agonized wails
Might suggest that the devil was in the details,
Don't insist that the culprits be thrown into jails,
Show that *you* at least know what good building entails
For a clever young artist subverting the form.

So the next time you're out and the air is aswarm
With pestiferous flies, and the staff smell like minks,
And your coffee's served cold and your sherbet's served warm,
And there's spit on your entrees and piss in your drinks,
Don't storm out in a huff, shouting how the joint stinks,
But instead flash the host, cooks, and servers sly winks—
Let them know you're a modern food critic who thinks
They're all clever young artists subverting the form.

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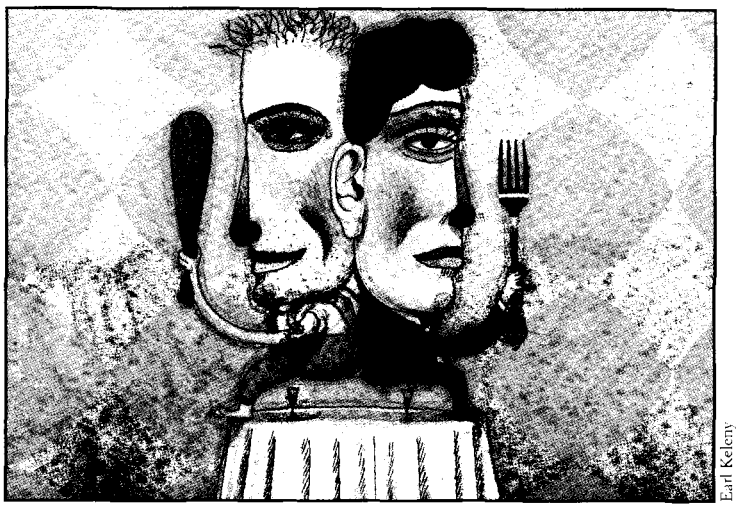
What Makes Southern Manners Peculiar?

by Ward S. Allen



Earl Kelemy

"Southerners live in the 18th century." This common charge is not altogether false, since the peculiar habits, customs, and meanings of words found often in the American South are found also in 18th-century English authors. Most English-speaking people use the word "manners" now only in the senses designated by the Oxford English Dictionary as current: "External behaviour in social intercourse" or "Polite behaviour or deportment; habits indicative of good breeding." But the oldest meaning for "manners," which has also had the longest continual use, is now marked obsolete. The first citation in the OED for this meaning is dated 1225; the last citation is dated 1794. The next to last citation, dated 1757, comes from Samuel Johnson. This obsolete meaning is: "A person's habitual behaviour or conduct, esp. in reference to its moral aspect, moral character."

Those who think of manners in this sense are 200 years behind the times. But the mode of thought that connects moral character to manners had been accepted for over 2,000 years when it fell out of use among English-speaking people. The Greek word *ethos* and the Latin word *mores* join behavior, character, and morals into a general notion. This general notion is the source for the concept expressed in the English word "manners," "which early became the recognized translation of L. *modus* and *mos*, and its sense development has been affected by assimilation to both these words" (OED). So, Southerners who continue to hold this concept are not merely 200 years behind the times: Since this notion is central to the thought of Plato and Aristotle, Southerners are 2,500 years behind the times.

The Greek word *ethos* is translated as "manners" in the King James Version of the Bible, which has had a conspicuous influence on the civilization of the Bible Belt. The prologue to Ecclesiasticus states that the book is for "them also, which in a strange country are willing to learn, being prepared before in manners [*ethos*] to live after the law." St. Paul (quoting Menander) warned the Corinthians that "evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Corinthians 15:33).

In the late 18th century, Edward Gibbon uses "manners" throughout his history in the older sense. That this use became obsolete just at the moment when Gibbon and Samuel Johnson were using the word in this sense is puzzling, because these two men are among England's best prose stylists. With the loss of the word, the concept is lost. In his *Life of Samuel Johnson L.L.D.*, Boswell had maintained that

> the genteelest characters are often the most immoral. Does not Lord Chesterfield give precepts for uniting wickedness and the graces? A man, indeed, is not genteel when he gets drunk; but most vices may be committed very genteely; a man may debauch his friend's wife genteely; he may cheat at cards genteely.

Standing firmly for the union of morals and manners, Dr. Johnson answered: "You are meaning two different things. One means exteriour grace; the other honour. It is certain that a man may be very immoral with exteriour grace." The current and common word for exterior grace is *etiquette*, which Lord Chesterfield introduced into English in 1750. The rules of etiquette are tickets to "polite society," a phrase from the definition of *etiquette* in the OED.

Manners and honor having been torn asunder, the traditional idea of a "gentleman" became obsolete. But Southerners

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clung to the idea, which led clever people in step with the times to disparage Southerners for their peculiar manners. "Southern men were proud of being gentlemen, although they have been told in every conceivable way that it was a foolish pride" (Basil L. Gildersleeve, *The Creed of the Old South, 1865-1915*). But this very idea of a gentleman has kept the concept of manners alive in the South while it became obsolete elsewhere.

Gildersleeve, who was born in Charleston, South Carolina, became professor of Greek at the University of Virginia and, during his summer vacations from 1861 to 1864, fought with the Confederate army. His vast scholarly work and his seven honorary doctorates attest to his reputation as the foremost scholar among American classicists.

Moral qualities were the foundation of his gracious manners. His way of life was modest and temperate. "I have lived well so far if *bene qui latuit bene vixit* [He has lived well who has lain well hidden] is true, and I am content to live well to the end." As all of Gildersleeve's works show, he was wise. Paul Shorey, the great Platonist, noted that the speakers at Gildersleeve's memorial service "dwelt not so much on the wit, brilliancy, the scholarship, which they took for granted, as on the moral qualities of the man, the teacher, the companion, the helper, the friend."

His training in morals and manners began early. When he was four years old, he had read the complete Bible in English, though, he says, with little understanding. At the age of five, he had read St. John's Gospel in Greek. From then to the end of his life, he thought most readily in the Greek language.

Gildersleeve had an unsurpassed knowledge of the ancient classics. But, in the South, there were enough general readers to keep current the idea of manners as an English equivalent to *ethos* and *mores*. A favorite book among Virginia gentlemen was *Parallel Lives*, written in Greek by Plutarch, who examines character and its influence on the governance of society. Those who could not read Plutarch in Greek had at hand an English classic, the translation of the *Lives*, by John Dryden. A passage from Dryden's "Pericles" draws together virtue and manners:

> But such is the effect of virtuous actions, that we not only admire them but long to copy the example. The goods of fortune we wish to enjoy, virtue we desire to practise; the former we are content to receive from others, the effects of the latter we are ambitious that others should receive from us. For it is the *nature of virtue* to draw us powerfully to itself, to kindle in us an active principle *to form our manners* and engage our affections, and this even in an historical description . . .

The ancient classics now have few readers in the South, and common readers of the English classics are also few. Nonetheless, customs that have their origin and support in the classics have survived, including the reply, "Just fine, thank you," to the query, "How are you?"; the query to a single person, "How are you all?"; and the use of "sir" and "ma'am" in addressing parents, teachers, overseers, pastors, and priests.

Visitors to the South have regarded as peculiar the automatic reply, "Just fine, thank you." Some have criticized the custom as encouraging hypocrisy and falsehood. Older and wiser people once had an answer to this charge: The inquiry is not about your health, your lungs, your bank account, or love, but asks after your disposition. "And," a grandmother would tell you, "if your disposition is not *just fine*, you stay in your room, young man." "Disposition" is a grand old word, now seldom heard. Its Middle English sense, "turn of mind," is still in use. This suggests that the virtue that leads to a good disposition is the virtue of the mind: wisdom. But in his *De officiis*, Cicero assigns a steady disposition, a steady turn of mind, to fortitude.

We all know that adversity calls for fortitude. But Cicero suggests that prosperity also calls for fortitude: "When things are prospering and flowing according to our will, let us with great labor flee pride, fastidiousness, and arrogance." Would the critic of Southern manners think it hypocritical if someone in good health, with a large bank account, with good grades in school, with success in love, were to reply, "Just fine, thank you"? Taking these conditions as circumstances warranting the word "fine" exposes a narrowness in one's conception of human nature that sees well-being as resting on accidents rather than essences. Cicero and the grandmother have kept the soul in view. Thus, Cicero's advice is much the same as the grandmother's. In both adversity and prosperity, keep *idem vultus*—"the same face"—and *eadem frons*—"a contented countenance." The Southerner may recall St. Paul's haunting words, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content" (Philippians 4:11). King James' translators proposed "disposition" as a gloss to "good manners" in their rendering of 1 Corinthians 15:33.

Often, in the South, a conversation will begin with "How are y'all?" and end with "Tell all of 'em I say, 'Hello there.'" A single person addressed as many people, a pronoun without an antecedent, and an adverb without a referent strike visitors to the South as peculiar, Hollywood as amusing, and English teachers as intolerable. But those who mind their manners ask after "all," who may be family, friends, members of a church or club, or any other association of people. One way to keep current the sense of manners that combines behavior, character, and morals is to preserve the customs that sprang out of that sense. Such is the custom of asking after "y'all," which subordinates the secular to the spiritual state. This question asks generally about a family and, at its best, carries the hope that their spiritual state is just fine, a state that "cannot be accounted for by any human formula." Cicero assigns the bonds of kinship to the cardinal virtue of justice. The family, he asserts, is the foundation of the city and the seminary of a republic. "Just fine." Taken as an adverb, "just" here means "precisely"; as an adjective, "fine" means "free from dross or impurity" (OED). Thus Socrates, condemned to die, but true to his principles, could answer truthfully, "Just fine." This is one of those memorable moments in Western civilization when a human being becomes a living image of ideal behavior. "Just fine" is a reminder of the ideal to which we should be faithful, however obstinately opposed to that ideal our feeling may be at the moment.

The guardians of a family are parents. The guardians of a city are teachers, pastors, and officers of the law. The guardians of a republic are soldiers. All of these guardians have courage as their foremost virtue. The foremost virtue of citizens is temperance. A Southern custom trains children, citizens in embryo, to respect their elders, the guardians. This training maroons Southerners in the waste places of past ages. Erasmus illustrates, in his *Colloquy on Manners* (1522), this very training for schoolboys.

> Master: How long have you been away from home?
> Boy: Nearly six months.

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Master: You should have added "sir."
Boy: Nearly six months, sir.

Southerners find terms of respect natural. Children use them in addressing their parents; students use them in addressing teachers; workmen use them in addressing overseers; laymen use them in addressing pastors and priests. These terms are common in various relations of society.

An old friend of mine lay ill and extremely weak. His son, himself a father, entered the room. The old man mumbled in a weak voice. The son asked courteously, "What?" In a strong, urgent, and imperative voice, the old man said, "You say 'sir' to your father." "Sir?" the son obediently answered. With this custom, the relation of father to son does not fade with age.

At a country church in Alabama, a minister was reading from an old-fashioned service for a wedding. He read in that rich, resonant, baritone voice that is one of God's gifts to black men: "Do you take this woman to be your wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of Matrimony?" When he had read the last words of the charge, "so long as ye both shall live," he whispered to the groom, "Say, 'I do.'" The groom answered in a loud voice and emphasized each word, "Yes, sir, I do." Never have I heard a more convincing affirmation to that charge.

In a recent court case in Louisiana, a working man was called to the stand as a witness. His answer to one question was ambiguous. "Do you mean this or that?" the judge asked. "Yes," the witness answered. "Yes, what?" the judge asked. "Yes, sir," the workman answered. That man had been trained in the very same manner as Erasmus's master trained his boys in 1522.

An Auburn University student who had gone north for graduate work addressed his teacher as "sir." The professor corrected him: "Don't say 'Sir.' People don't like that up here." To catch up with the times, we must revise Erasmus:

Professor: How long have you been away from home?
Student: Nearly six months, sir.
Professor: You should not say "sir."
Student: Nearly six months.

Those who are in step with the times find the old-fashioned Southern and Erasmian manners peculiar. But who can foretell the future? The hand of fortune is fickle. Will old-fashioned manners come back into common use? Will the common manners of this age come to seem peculiar? Will students again be taught to say, "Nearly six months, sir"?

As Cicero makes clear in his analysis of temperance, the old as well as the young must be temperate if the family circle is to be just. The duty of elders is to exhibit in their own conduct temperance joined to prudence; by this union, they will serve their children, their friends, and the state. Southern fathers learned this lesson of temperance both for the old and the young in the ancient classics and in the Bible. It is clear in St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, 6:1-4.

Children obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.
Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)
That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.
And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

A visit to a country house 74 years ago has left me a vivid and fond memory. Even at that time, the house was ancient. The ceilings seemed to a four-year-old boy as far away as the starry skies. The stair was a way to heaven. The wonder of the sight startled a four-year-old boy who had forgotten to remove his cap. My father looked down. "Don't forget your cap, Captain." He and I played like soldiers. Sometimes, he was the captain, and I his soldier; sometimes, we reversed roles. A sharp rebuke would have humiliated me and provoked me to anger. But anger was averted. I remained the captain. Honor and rank were mine, even though I had failed to mind my manners.

Southern manners have left this province stranded with Edward Gibbon and Dr. Johnson in the 18th century. Or, are we isolated with Ben Jonson in the 17th century? With Erasmus in the 16th century? With Cicero in the last century B.C.? With Plato in the fifth century B.C.? With Pindar in the sixth century B.C.?

Basil L. Gildersleeve's *Pindar,* first published in 1885, remains standard. Although Pindar came from a province, Boetia, which was "hopelessly behind the times," men still read and admire his poetry, written 2,500 years ago. Gildersleeve has pointed out that his case is not singular.

> Large historical views are not always entertained by the cleverest minds, ancient and modern, transatlantic and cisatlantic; and the annals of politics, of literature, of thought, have shown that out of the depths of crass conservatism and proverbial sluggishness come, not by any miracle, but by the process of accumulated force, some of the finest intelligences, some of the greatest powers, of political, literary, and especially religious life.

As an example of religious life, Gildersleeve offers Cappadocia: "A Cappadocian king was a butt in the time of Cicero; the Cappadocians were the laughing-stock of the Greek anthology, and yet there are no prouder names in the literary history of the Church than the names of the Cappadocian fathers, Basil and the Gregories."

The South, like Boetia, has been "hopelessly behind the times." Like Cappadocia, it has been the laughing-stock of clever minds. Yet from the South have come "some of the finest intelligences, some of the greatest powers, of political, literary, and especially religious life."

Among those whose intelligences, formed by the "process of accumulated force," have put their work beyond destruction by time's fleeting hand is Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve. Behind his love for his native country was an intelligence which, refining that love, dispelled sentimentality. He was not sentimental about his country or himself. In a letter, written in his 88th year, he quoted Goethe: "'*Vollkommen is die Norm des Himmels, Vollkommen wollen die Norm des Menschen?*'—a sentence I have long cherished and alas! applied too feebly." This long-cherished sentence states, in sum, that men long for perfection, but it is found only in heaven, God's dwelling-place.

Experience has shown that the old-fashioned view of manners has pointed the way to an agreeable, if less than perfect, society in the South. These manners are a source for contentment with your state and destiny. Wherever these manners and contentment remain, they will seem peculiar to restless, clever minds. c

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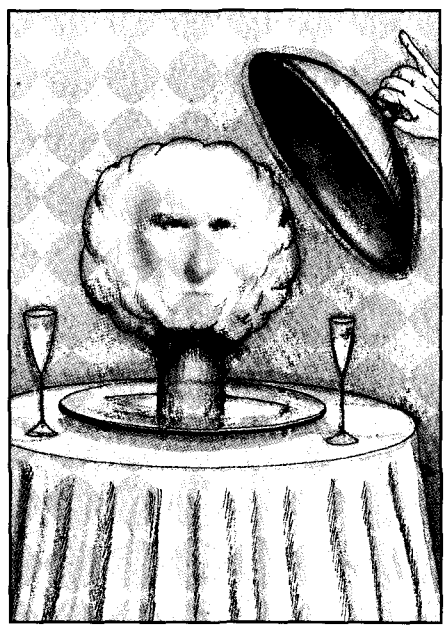
Dirty for Dirty

by Samuel Francis

"Nothing is easier than to blame the dead."

—Julius Caesar

American Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City Bombing
by Lou Michel and Dan Herbeck
New York: ReganBooks;
426 pp., $26.00



Earl Keleny

In the 1944 movie *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*, Spencer Tracy, playing Col. Jimmy Doolittle, briefs his flyers before they take off to bomb their Japanese targets by telling them that they are almost certain to be killing civilians and that, if any of them have any moral problems with that, they can back out now. No one does, and the problem is never raised again.

It is not known if the late, unlamented Timothy J. McVeigh ever saw Dalton Trumbo's chest-thumping war movie that blatantly propagandizes on behalf of blowing the filthy little Japs to smithereens. His taste ran to rather more modern films, such as *Star Trek* and—his favorite—Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven*, but it is doubtful that he had any more problem with killing civilians than the American heroes of World War II did. According to *American Terrorist*, an exhaustive and not unsympathetic account of the life and thought of Timothy McVeigh by two *Buffalo News* reporters in whom he confided, McVeigh did have problems with the Gulf War, in which he served with distinction, and with his own killing of two Iraqi soldiers in the course of combat. McVeigh had doubts about the propriety of the Gulf War from the beginning, but he was also a professional soldier (a "warrior," in his view) who prided himself on being able to perform his mission without hesitation or complaint. It was precisely the same professional military mentality that he brought to the planning and perpetration of the largest act of terrorism and mass murder in American history, the Oklahoma City bombing of April 19, 1995, for which he was executed last June.

Michel and Herbeck's *American Terrorist* has been savaged for its supposed whitewashing of Timothy McVeigh and for providing the murderer a platform from which he was allowed to publicize his political beliefs and justify his actions. Attorney General John Ashcroft publicly begged the news media not to become "Timothy McVeigh's co-conspirator in his assault on America's public safety and upon America itself," as though what McVeigh had to say was itself an act of terrorism.

McVeigh, of course, had every right to say what he wanted to say, and even if every bit of it were chicken droppings, it would still provide a valuable insight into his mind and motivations. And although much of what McVeigh *did* have to say is banal in the extreme, his core message was one that Americans ought to listen to and think about.

By now, it is generally known that McVeigh admitted for the first time in Michel and Herbeck's book that he planned, built, and planted the bomb that destroyed the Alfred P. Murrah Building and killed 168 people and that he claimed he acted largely alone, with only minimal assistance from his friends, Terry Nichols and Michael Fortier. Some, especially those on the American right, will fault the book for not exploring more intensely the various conspiracy theories that have sprouted around McVeigh and the bombing. Nowhere does the book refer to the analysis of the bomb by retired Brig. Gen. Benton K. Partin of the U.S. Air Force, an explosives-technology expert, that challenges the official view that a single bomb outside the building could have inflicted the kind of damage that occurred. Nor does it explore the conspiracy theory, woven by the *New American* and the *Spotlight*, that seeks to implicate a wide range of neo-Nazis, Satanists, U.S. and European intelligence agencies, and the Clinton administration (among other demons) in planning and masterminding the bombing as a kind of Reichstag fire with which the right-wing political opponents of the New World Order could be smeared and discredited or suppressed.

The Oklahoma City bombing did serve that purpose, as the hysterical left-

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wing attack on every figure on the political right—from Newt Gingrich to the members of National Alliance—in the weeks after the bombing made clear, but Michel and Herbeck provide no evidence (nor does any other reliable source that I know of) that the perpetrators of the bombing intended it to do so. Michel and Herbeck mention only briefly McVeigh's insignificant contacts with Andreas Strassmeir and an alleged "neo-Nazi" compound at Elohim City, Oklahoma, as well as other efforts by him to contact the National Alliance, and they seem to accept at face value McVeigh's denial of any close connection between him and such groups or between such groups and the bombing.

If the book has one persistent flaw, it is that the authors seem to accept as true whatever McVeigh told them. Generally speaking, this is not a problem, since the purpose of the book is largely to tell the story of the bombing and the bomber from McVeigh's point of view. McVeigh not only wanted to get this out but to discredit the conspiratorial account offered by his former defense lawyer, Stephen Jones, in his own book about the bombing. McVeigh may have tried to make himself look considerably better, more intelligent, more psychologically and socially normal, and more attractive in character and personality than he really was, and his emphatic denial that "John Doe II" ever existed, and his effort to explain his often contradictory behavior by claiming that he really wanted to be caught so he could defend the bombing to the public, are both open to question. Yet neither McVeigh's character and purposes nor any of the bizarre conspiracy theories about the case is the most interesting or important aspect of it.

Of far greater interest, and what a good many journalists profess to be unable to understand, is why Timothy McVeigh never expressed any regret, remorse, or guilt about what he did and how his apparent indifference to his act of terror could coexist with what apparently was otherwise a more or less well-adjusted personality. Despite experiencing his parents' wrenching divorce as a child, McVeigh grew up as not only an apparently normal but even likable young man, traits he retained throughout his life. Despite the claim (made by the media from the beginning of the case) that he and "John Doe II" were "white supremacists," there is no evidence whatsoever that McVeigh was even seriously prejudiced. It is true that he was a fan of *The Turner Diaries*, a violent racialist novel by National Alliance neo-Nazi William Pierce, and used to give it away to pals in the Army and later at gun shows. But what seems to have attracted him to the book is the guerrilla war against the federal government that the story gloatingly describes, and only when another soldier warned him that the book was "racist" and that he could get in trouble in the Army for handing it out did its racial views dawn on McVeigh. Michel's and Herbeck's volume includes a letter to the authors from Ted Kaczynski, the "Unabomber," who knew McVeigh briefly when they served in the same prison. Kaczynski, who comes across as a liberal stuffed shirt, acknowledges that

> I saw no indication of [racist tendencies]. On the contrary, [McVeigh] was on very friendly terms with the African-American inmates here and I never heard him make any remark that could have been considered even remotely racist.

Both before and during his service in the Army, McVeigh expressed generally commonplace racial beliefs about blacks, but there is no evidence at all that he subscribed to any kind of racialist ideology. He seems to have had an affair with Terry Nichols' Filipino wife, and his obsessive support for the victims of Waco, many of whom were black, would be peculiar in a serious racialist.

What McVeigh *was* serious about was his hatred of the federal government, and it is entirely fair to call him a libertarian. Indeed, he voted for the Libertarian Party presidential candidate in 1996 before his conviction, and despite his affection for the anti-black, anti-Jewish, and pro-Nazi *Turner Diaries*, his usual rhetorical framework for condemning what he disliked was "Nazi," "fascist," "Gestapo-like," "stormtroopers," etc. Yet his views were not entirely consistent. He loved the movie *Contact*, based on the late Carl Sagan's sappy science-fiction novel, as well as *Star Trek*, never grasping that the universalist ethic and collectivism that both reflect underlies the sort of political system that libertarians despise and resist. His religious beliefs were of little consequence; brought up a Roman Catholic, he told friends that "science is my religion," although he appears not to have known much about science beyond the art of making bombs. His reading—until he found himself in prison—consisted almost entirely of science fiction and entirely forgettable political tracts denouncing the federal government. Then he moved up to *Atlas Shrugged* and *Doctor Zhivago*. His school performance was never impressive; in prison, he graded 126 on an IQ test, not a brilliant score (Kaczynski's IQ is 167) but nothing to be ashamed of, either. His literary tastes may be judged from William Ernest Henley's poem *Invictus*, which he had distributed to witnesses at his execution.

Timothy McVeigh, then, was largely an ordinary man, and if there is nothing in his life or background to strike us as remarkable, neither is there much to impress us as sinister; it is probably because the conventional psychobabble categories and other clichés do not apply to or explain him that most journalists who have pondered McVeigh have no clue why he did what he did, much less why he seemed to feel no guilt about it. McVeigh was the product of a white, fairly affluent, working-class social environment; while his parents divorced, so do lots of other people whose children do not grow up to commit terrorist atrocities. Moreover, the ideology McVeigh professed is one that most American journalists find incomprehensible. Government is our friend, isn't it? The United States is a democracy, after all. Why would anyone hate the government? Anyone who does hate a democratic government is obviously a socially maladjusted psychopath. Why would any normal person worry very much about a bunch of religious nuts at Waco or a white racist like Randy Weaver at Ruby Ridge? Anyone concerned with that sort of thing must be nuts himself.

McVeigh outraged many people by describing the daycare center in the Murrah Building and the children whom he killed as "collateral damage," and by comparing the civilians slaughtered there with the fictitious characters sitting at computer consoles on board the Deathstar in *Star Wars*. The brutality and insensitivity of the remarks contrast with the McVeigh that emerges in this book, and also with the man who wrote a series of letters to journalist Phil Bacharach, who published them in the May issue of *Esquire*. Bacharach concludes,

> It is beyond me to reconcile the Timothy McVeigh who murdered

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> 168 people with the writer of these letters. . . . I do know one thing: In the written word, at least, he has not a whisper of conscience.

McVeigh claimed to Michel and Herbeck that he did not know the Murrah Building had a daycare center, that it was not visible from the street, that he would have picked another target had he known it was there, and that he tried to avoid harming civilians. That may or may not be true, but it really does not matter very much. Would the bombing have been morally defensible if no children had been killed? Did McVeigh worry that taxpayers, veterans, crime victims, plaintiffs and defendants, and others with legitimate claims against the federal government might also be in the building that morning? The fact is that McVeigh did not give a damn about them, or the children, or whether there were federal law-enforcement agents in the building, or whether the federal bureaucrats he deliberately murdered had personally done anything wrong. Timothy McVeigh was indifferent to his victims because he had convinced himself that he was a soldier enlisted in his own private war against what he called the "federal juggernaut," and he felt no more remorse for slaughtering the enemies he selected than Jimmy Doolittle's fliers felt when they firebombed Japanese civilians in Tokyo, or later in Hiroshima, Nagasaki, or Dresden; or (as McVeigh himself wrote in a letter last May to Fox News correspondent Rita Cosby) American pilots when they bombed civilian targets in Iraq and Serbia.

"Bombing the Murrah Federal Building," McVeigh wrote to Miss Cosby,

> was morally and strategically equivalent to the U.S. hitting a government building in Serbia, Iraq or other nations. Based on observations of the policies of my own government, I viewed this action as an acceptable option. From this perspective, what occurred in Oklahoma City was no different than [*sic*] what Americans rain on the heads of others all the time and, subsequently, my mindset was and is one of clinical detachment.

Much the same point is made in *American Terrorist*: "The American military," Michel and Herbeck write,

> had been using the same philosophy for years, he would argue. American bombing raids were designed to take lives, not just destroy buildings. The atom bombs that brought a bloody end to World War II—the bombs in whose image he saw his own—were designed to kill not just hundreds but thousands of people. He claimed to take no pleasure from killing. But in his mind, McVeigh had no trouble justifying what he was about to do.

Indeed, McVeigh's argument is not noticeably different from that invoked by neoconservative columnist Bruce Fein in a column during the Gulf War. When U.S. bombs struck (apparently accidentally) an Iraqi bomb shelter containing civilians, President Bush expressed regrets for the deaths that ensued. Fein, in a column published in the *Washington Times* on February 20, 1991, claimed that "the vast majority of Iraq's population has actively assisted Saddam's international lawlessness" and that the "people of Iraq" (not just its government or leaders) "are responsible for the aggression and war crimes of their president."

> Why, therefore, should Mr. Bush instruct the U.S. military scrupulously to avoid civilian targets in Iraq . . . ? During World War II the Allied powers massively bombed Berlin, Dresden, and Tokyo for reasons of military and civilian morale. Winston Churchill instructed the Royal Air Force to "make the rubble dance" in German cities. Why is Mr. Bush treating Iraqi civilians more solicitously than the enemy civilians of World War II?

If the U.S. military can blame the "innocent" civilians of an enemy state for the policies of that state and deliberately wage lethal action against them, then why should Timothy McVeigh not justify his own war against "innocent" federal bureaucrats and their children? Forget *The Turner Diaries*. The real question is: Did Timothy McVeigh read Bruce Fein?

McVeigh reflects exactly the same morality that Fein expresses, a morality that knows no distinction between civilian and military but lumps them together as "enemies" and regards them all as fair game to be blown to bits. To some extent, McVeigh was mocking that morality in his bombing of the Murrah Building, reducing it to the absurdity that it is; but partly, he was also embracing it (as he explicitly does in his comments to Michel and Herbeck and in his letter to Miss Cosby), and exploiting it as a justification of his action. Insofar as he embraced it, McVeigh felt and could feel no guilt for the bombing; insofar as he mocked it, he could claim that the federal government could not fairly blame him for doing what it does routinely, that he was merely paying it back in the same coin—"dirty for dirty," as he put it to the authors.

What Timothy McVeigh did was indeed an act of mass murder that deserved death, if not a good deal more. But the point he tried to make in his act of murder remains a serious one—that, in modern warfare as practiced routinely and happily by the United States and other modern democracies, and increasingly even in domestic law enforcement, lethal civilian casualties are acceptable (if civilians are not often deliberately selected targets). McVeigh's insistence that Americans see that point and the horror it embodies was made with a savagery he had no right to commit; but it may have been, as he claimed it was, the only way the point could be communicated at all to a government that has become too morally irresponsible even to offer Jimmy Doolittle's token option of backing out now and a population too morally obtuse to accept the choice, even if it were offered. It is hardly surprising that so few journalists were able to understand why Timothy McVeigh felt no remorse for the mass bloodshed he caused; hardly anyone else in the United States today is able to understand it either, or the moral point that the Oklahoma City bombing tried to convey. c

LIBERAL ARTS

ROLL OVER, MARTIN LUTHER

"There are ways of birth control. I'm a Protestant, and Protestants don't have any problem with family planning [*sic*], and the Chinese government is saying one child a family, which seems excessive, perhaps, but that's the rule and so far it's working for them."

—*Pat Robertson, from an April 18, 2001, interview on* The Edge *with Paula Zahn*

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The Reluctant Candidate

by Alan Miller

Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus
by Rick Perlstein
New York: Hill and Wang Publishers; 671 pp., $30.00

◆

As a conservative undergraduate student during the early 1960's, I spent many a long night engaged in animated political argument with a close friend whose supercharged IQ was exceeded only by his condescending manner. The fellow never tired of reminding me that, yes, there were a *few* responsible Republican public officials. He would always tick off a very short list of them, which routinely included such liberal GOP icons as Sen. Clifford Case of New Jersey, and, of course, Nelson Rockefeller. My friend summarily dismissed conservatives as denizens of the netherworld, characterizing them as either Southern bigots who believed that blacks, women, Roman Catholics, and Jews should be kept in their place, or as benighted boors who occupied the lower rungs of the evolutionary ladder.

Then, in 1964, a cantankerous Arizona senator confounded pundits and Republican leaders alike by capturing the GOP presidential nomination. Barry Goldwater's sudden ascendance, and the national conservative movement that he helped set in motion, are the subject of Rick Perlstein's provocative yet sympathetic book.

Rather than resorting to boilerplate explanations for Lyndon Johnson's landslide victory, Perlstein concentrates on the shifting political landscape. He keelhauls the pundits for smugly dismissing Goldwater's candidacy, citing their premature postmortem as "one of the most dramatic failures of discernment in the history of American journalism." Two years later, he notes, "conservatives so dominated Congress that [LBJ] couldn't even get a majority to appropriate money for rodent control in the slums." The House Republican Caucus elected as chair of its policy committee John Rhodes, a Goldwater *protégé* from Arizona. Moreover, ten new conservative Republican governors—most notably Ronald Reagan in California—won election. (Not bad for a conservative movement that had been written off as a mere political footnote by the so-called wise men after the 1964 election.) Perlstein reminds us of a growing national discontent with President John Kennedy in 1963 that caused more and more voters to reconsider whether he deserved reelection: Increasing civil unrest combined with a rudderless foreign policy had prompted many to question Kennedy's competence. More and more people began to clamor for a plainspoken leader who would change the political dialogue.

November 22, 1963, of course, altered the political landscape, and the hazy afterglow of Camelot lulled much of the country into nostalgic reveries about the fallen prince and what might have been had he lived to fulfill his destiny. Few recalled that Kennedy's fateful Dallas trip was basically intended to help close the ever-widening political breach in the Deep South. President Johnson acknowledged the magnitude of that breach when, after signing the Civil Rights Act of 1964, he told his staff, "I think we just gave the South to the Republicans for your lifetime and mine."

Perlstein also documents the merciless media mugging that Goldwater received from the moment he became the GOP presidential nominee and decamped from the Cow Palace in San Francisco. Magazines and newspapers that had formerly praised his forthrightness began to pummel him as a reckless political extremist. The normally GOP-friendly *Saturday Evening Post* reflected this sulfurous sentiment when it recommended his crushing defeat for the salvation of the party. Psychiatrists and psychologists were trotted out to question Goldwater's sanity. The Democrats, under direction from Bill Moyers, proved adept at character assassination, depicting Goldwater as a trigger-happy wild man who was itching for full-scale nuclear war in Vietnam.

Meantime, Goldwater's many missteps played into the hands of his critics. Downright disdainful of the hoopla involved in running a national campaign, the reluctant candidate was far more comfortable articulating his philosophical differences with an overweening federal government. As a presidential candidate, Goldwater was too honest, stubbornly refusing to pander to his audiences. Instead, he inveighed against Social Security when addressing Florida retirees, assailed the Tennessee Valley Authority before the very folks who benefited from the federal project, condemned federal cotton subsidies in the presence of Southern cotton growers, and criticized a major defense contract to General Dynamics in Fort Worth, Texas, the home of the military-aircraft division of the company. Goldwater's dislike of campaigning showed in his desultory, rambling speeches, as in his response to supporters who kept chanting, "We want Barry": "If you'll shut up, you'll get him."

Perlstein claims that Goldwater's biggest strategic blunder was jettisoning F. Clifton White, who was primarily responsible for the senator's success in gaining the nomination. White's command and control of supporters at the convention was masterful. Yet he was discarded soon thereafter in favor of such Goldwater confidantes as Denison Kitchel and Karl Hess, who were clearly beyond their depth.

Despite his several shortcomings, the candidate remained a straight-shooter. When Lee Edwards implored the senator to capitalize on his rugged Western persona, Goldwater shot back, "Lee, we're not going to have that kind of crap on this campaign. This is going to be a campaign of principles, not of personalities. I don't want that kind of Madison Avenue stuff, and if you try it, I will kick your ass out of this office."

His opponent was not so scrupulous, allowing his operatives to suggest that Goldwater would savage Social Security, start World War III, roll back civil-rights laws, and otherwise unleash the forces of darkness upon the land. These horror stories were commonly accepted on college campuses, where this thoroughly decent man was routinely heckled as a hatemonger. Late in the campaign, I attended a Goldwater speech at Toledo University. No sooner had the senator begun to speak than he was showered with verbal abuse from the crowd. He had to cut short his remarks. Ronald Reagan, who campaigned for Goldwater, had far better crowd reactions. His ability to mesmerize an audience prompted ABC newsman Howard K. Smith to comment that Reagan had missed his calling: He should have gone into politics. (The fabled speech that Reagan delivered toward the campaign's end prompted comparisons with William Jennings Bryan's fiery "Cross of Gold" oration before the

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Democratic National Convention in 1896.)

Incidentally, my liberal Republican friend from college has become a staunch conservative. To paraphrase the lament of Goldwater voters four decades ago, those 27 million Americans turned out not to be wrong after all.

Alan Miller is an editorial writer for the San Diego Union-Tribune.

The Lion and the Fox

by J.O. Tate

James Burnham
by Samuel Francis
London: Claridge Press;
164 pp., $14.95

◆

This second edition of Samuel Francis's monograph on the political thought of James Burnham (1904-1987) is a fascinating exposition of a remarkable body of work. Francis focuses on the thought and not the man, on the books and columns—especially those printed in *National Review*—produced during Burnham's most interesting period as a writer, which extended from his break with Marxism in 1940 to the end of his career in 1978. Francis's work on Burnham has three major levels of appeal, each in itself of compelling interest.

The first of these is the ostensible one. James Burnham's most important books—probably *The Managerial Revolution* and *The Machiavellians*—and his later articulation of the challenge of communism and its inherently tyrannical nature, as well as various of the positions he advocated in the 1940's and 50's and those he took in *National Review* in the last 23 years of his career, challenged most members of the conservative movement in those decades, and still do today. Burnham did not write in the traditional language of Anglo-American political theory and reference. He was not a Burkean like Russell Kirk, nor a Straussian, nor a Catholic (until his conversion late in life), nor an exhausted liberal, nor a libertarian, nor a capitalist, nor a neoconservative. In fact, as an academic of aesthetic and philosophical sophistication (and a former Trotskyite), Burnham had, by 1940, been around the block in ways that are hard for the ordinary conservative to credit. But his experience—including even, or perhaps I should say *especially*, his Marxism—turned out to have been an invaluable one, freeing him to pursue a logic and a language he made his own. He so impressed George Orwell that *1984* must be read as a response to Burnham, as well as to the 20th century.

The book's second claim to our attention lies in Francis's account of the Italian tradition of historical and social analysis, which is as striking today, perhaps, as when Burnham described that tradition himself. Machiavelli showed the way toward an amoral insight into politics and the realities of power. Gaetano Mosca's "ruling class" and "political formula," Vilfredo Pareto's "elite" and "derivations" and "residues," and Robert Michels' "oligarchy" constructed a platform from which Burnham, surveying the revolutionary and violent 20th century, could assess the realities, not the professed ideals, of politics and power, in a language no one else employed. Escaping as quickly from the illusions of ideology as from the language of the liberal tradition, Burnham found himself free to pursue his account of the realities of power and the failures of both modern conservatism and liberalism to come to terms with those realities.

(I have long thought that Michels' "Iron Law of Oligarchy" is a prescription for despair. Evidently Michels—a social democrat who studied with Max Weber before World War I and eventually became a Fascist in Italy in the 1930's, apparently living out the logical consequences of his theory—thought so, too. If all organizations are oligarchical, then no social endeavors can be fruitful, since they must necessarily be twisted from their ostensible purposes to serve the interests of the elites who control them. The ex-social democrat went where the power was, since the Italian Fascists were relatively honest about their own nature—such was the self-justifying conclusion of this former left-winger. Michels' chastening story is not one that Francis has addressed—or Burnham either, as far as I know—but it is significant in the past century of political extremity and philosophical self-destruction. Burnham, of course, was a significant anti-type of that kind.)

The third appeal of Samuel Francis's study of Burnham is that it is, in part, a book not only *by* Francis, but *about* Francis. There can be little doubt concerning the influence Burnham exerted on Francis's mind as he studied this master. And there can be little doubt either that, just as Burnham in his time was a unique figure in the world of political discourse and analysis, so today there is nothing to compare with the political X-rays that Samuel Francis routinely directs upon the current social and political scene. Francis's own application of the Machiavellian tradition is apparent in *Beautiful Losers* as well as in his columns in *Chronicles*. And I don't hesitate to add that, if *James Burnham* does not have quite the stylistic flash we have come to expect from Sam Francis, then neither did James Burnham possess the sheer writerly ability with which Samuel Francis enhances mordant insights drawn and individually developed from the line of thinkers whom he has so lucidly comprehended and expounded.

J.O. Tate is a professor of English at Dowling College on Long Island.

The Last Aristotelian

by Paul Gottfried

Robert Nisbet:
Communitarian Traditionalist
by Brad Lowell Stone
Wilmington: ISI Books;
109 pp., $19.95

◆

This compact and thoughtful biography by the director of American Studies at Oglethorpe University underscores a recurrent problem affecting the reputations of conservative social thinkers. Even those who once enjoyed well-deserved celebrity cease to be widely studied after they are gone. Save for the interest of devoted disciples with quite limited media access, the contemporary thinkers I grew up admiring have not succeeded in attracting the attention of a later, more self-satisfied generation. By providing a highly readable intellectual biography of a brilliant social theorist who expressed politically unfashionable opinions, Brad Lowell Stone does for

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Robert Nisbet what Samuel Francis did for James Burnham. In Nisbet's case, the need for such an act of retrieval may seem all the more remarkable, given the academic fame and publishing successes he enjoyed during his life. The author of distinguished books that sold well (including *The Quest for Community* (1952), *The Sociological Tradition* (1967), and *The Twilight of Authority* (1975)), Albert Schweitzer Professor of Humanities at Columbia University, and a recipient of—among many honors—the NEH's Jefferson Lectureship and the Ingersoll Foundation's Richard M. Weaver Award, Nisbet was among the most respected of all American social thinkers at the time of his death in 1996. What he did not receive was the voluminous gushing praise bestowed on that ponderous nostalgic and Trotskyist lamenter of totalitarianism, Hannah Arendt; the dissipated boy wonder of Marxist-Leninist posturing, C. Wright Mills; or Daniel Bell and Talcott Parsons, neither of whom has managed to construct a lucid paragraph or even a single passage unbesmirched by unsightly jargon. (Robert Nisbet, by contrast, was an elegant stylist.)

Making Nisbet appear relevant to today's readers is a task made more difficult by the fact that he rallied to all the wrong causes. A Taft Republican who heartily despised the New Deal and its later reincarnations, a skeptic in religious matters who expressed revulsion for the Religious Right, and a personal friend of Richard Nixon, Nisbet today would be as unlikely to be invited to speak at CPAC as at a plenary gathering of American academic sociologists. One of his signal scholarly contributions was to popularize (if that is the term) the social commentary of 19th-century conservative critics of the French Revolution. Nisbet emphasized the close links between traditionalist defenders of community faced with revolutionary upheaval and the birth of sociology as a body of knowledge and field of inquiry. He argued persuasively that the fathers of his discipline were not social radicals such as Marx, but Louis de Bonald, Frederic Le Play, Albrecht von Haller, and other apologists for disintegrating aristocratic societies, trying to make sense of their time. Even Durkheim and Tönnies were drawn to the insights of conservatives when examining and describing traditional societies. Nisbet, himself a conservative, sought to restore to his field its original identity, which had been pushed aside in favor of the ideologically more congenial one fashioned by his colleagues.

Stone sees as a main bridge between Nisbet's work and the present age the stress on intermediate institutions as the foundation of a free society. Nisbet never deluded himself into believing that individuals bent on self-gratification provided a bulwark against state power. To the contrary, he thought that the pleasures and "rights" claimed by them fortified the central state in its role as champion of alleged victims of unenlightened communities and kin groups. While Nisbet certainly never believed that all communities are free from repression, he did perceive the inevitable tie between administrative control exercised by intrusive government and the war against inherited social authorities. He also questioned, as Stone reminds us in his perceptive concluding chapter, whether *laissez-faire* economics was of any great value in reining in social engineers. Nisbet assumed that economic progress brought social dislocation and led ultimately to the expansion of public administration.

Stone is also correct to distinguish Nisbet's notion of "social capital" from the one pushed by such left-liberal sociologists as Robert Bellah and Robert Putnam. While their ilk associate social resources with "economic or political structures" and with the strengthening of "public institutions," Nisbet valued the cognitive and social development of individuals in families and self-sustaining communities. He rejected both what he thought to be "cancerous individualism" and the depersonalizing effects of the managerial state. And Nisbet did not hesitate to break even further with the progressive mindset by turning for his models of social integration to the communal, rural Euro-American past. Stone observes that any serious examination of a civil society not fashioned or recreated by the central state must begin with Nisbet's understanding of the human personality, which was demonstrably—and by no means coincidentally—the one favored by Aristotle.

Paul Gottfried is a professor of humanities at Elizabethtown College in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, and the author, most recently, of After Liberalism: Mass Democracy in the Managerial State *(Princeton).*

LIBERAL ARTS

THE REAL ABSENCE AND THE MANAGERIAL REVOLUTION

"Perhaps the very bigness of megachurches makes them amplifying devices for cultural trends. This is true not only of obvious themes (the video monitor appearing in church at about the same time it began to appear at ballparks) but also of deeper cultural patterns.

"For example, one of the most striking features of Southeast Christian Church is the sheer scale and efficiency of the enterprise, from the nursery to the Greenlee Communion Dispensing System (invented by a member at Southeast, this ingenious device 'dispenses an entire communion tray in just two seconds!', sending grape juice from a compact, stainless steel reservoir through plastic tubing to the individual communion cups).

"One is not surprised, then, to learn that among the paid staff and especially the elders and other volunteers are individuals who have had years of experience with the military, Federal Express, and similar organizations. A church like Southeast could not have existed 100 years ago, because the managerial science it embodies was then just being born."

—from John Wilson, "Not Just Another Megachurch"
(Christianity Today, *December 4, 2000*)

Prince of Painters

by Jeffrey Meyers

Titian
by Filippo Pedrocco,
translated by Corrado Federici
New York: Rizzoli Press;
336 pp., $100.00

◆

Titian, the greatest painter of the Venetian Renaissance, was born about 1488 in Pieve di Cadoro, in the foothills of the Dolomites. He came down to Venice at the age of nine and was apprenticed to the workshops of Gentile and Giovanni Bellini. He wrote letters to his noble patrons, some of them explaining the delay in delivering his

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work ("It would have reached Spain several months ago had it not been for the tardiness, indisposition, and eventually the death of your secretary"). But very little is known about his personal life.

Giorgio Vasari knew Titian personally and described him as "a most healthy and fortunate man, who has received nothing but favours from heaven. In addition to his genius he possesses the most courtly manners." He was robust, energetic, and immensely productive; devoted to his family; patriotically attached to Venice; reluctant to travel, though he went south to Rome and north to Augsburg; proud of his honors and fame; at ease with the great potentates of his age. He became official painter to the Venetian state as well as to the Emperor Charles V and to his son, Philip II of Spain. In his epic poem *Orlando Furioso,* Ariosto wrote that "Titian is honored / Not only in Cadore, but also in Venice and Urbino." Like Verdi and Picasso, he produced a series of masterpieces into advanced old age. During the plague of 1576, he died of a fever.

This book is handsomely designed and sumptuously illustrated. Pedrocco has mastered the enormous—and often contradictory—scholarship, producing a dry but valuable introduction and commentary on all of Titian's 270 paintings. He relies on attribution, provenance, and date to establish the authoritative canon, but also considers iconography, content, and meaning. Titian completed many pictures begun by Giorgione; in these cases, it is difficult to determine the precise attributions. Bernard Berenson helped clarify the issue when he said that Titian's pictures seem "done by an older Giorgione, with better possession of himself, and a larger and firmer hold on the world." In his greatest art, Titian combines the chromatic voluptuosity of Giorgione with the sinuous draftsmanship of Dürer. He is masterful at painting the subtle textures of linen, velvet, and silk, brocade, damask, and fur; of light glinting off gold, jewels, and armor. Toward the end of his long life, as his hand began to lose its cunning, he painted with his fingers as well as with his brush.

Pedrocco observes that Titian's magnificent portraits, "enlivened by the strong and luminous colors and the majestic monumentality of the forms," combine "psychological introspection with an extraordinary sense of physical presence." Titian first painted Charles V—the greatest monarch of his time—both seated in an armchair and standing with a dog. (Titian's charming dogs, especially the heavy white Labrador that appears in two paintings, humanize the often forbidding figures.) *Charles V at Mühlberg* (1548) commemorates the battle of April 24, 1547, in which the Protestants, led by Johann Friedrich, elector of Saxony, were beaten on the banks of the Elbe. Charles—mounted, with lance in hand and dressed in the armor he actually wore into combat—is portrayed at the summit of his power. The battle is now over, and the emperor, in heroic isolation as the armed and triumphant victor, claims the curiously peaceful field. Integrity, strength of will, and sense of duty shine forth from this Catholic knight and defender of the faith. Titian's painting influenced the equestrian portraits of Rubens and Velázquez, just as his lusciously sensual *Venus of Urbino* led directly to Goya's *Naked Maja* and Ingres's *Odalisque.*

Titian's portrait of Charles' defeated enemy, Johann Friedrich, also foreshadows Goya's satiric paintings of the Spanish royal family. His small head, with sloping forehead, is rammed into a monstrously swollen body (all *Wurst* and beer), without the benefit of a neck. His sausage-like fingers, florid complexion, and wary expression reveal the character of a man who's just narrowly escaped the sentence of death.

Titian portrayed Philip II (enemy of Elizabeth I) with pale face, heavy-lidded eyes, thick lips, and wispy beard. His rigid sheath of lavishly embossed armor opens to a defiant codpiece, puffed and slashed breeches, ivory hose, and soft white slippers. His hand rests on a plumed helmet, while the thick, scaly fingers of his gauntlet (resting on a red velvet cloth) suggest the warrior's menace.

Titian also did two superb *Self-Portraits.* In 1562, he is seated with one splay-fingered hand on a table, the other on his knee. Wearing a black cap, fur-trimmed jacket, shimmering white shirt, and Order of the Golden Spur (conferred by Charles V), the grey-bearded septuagenarian sage gazes dreamily into the distance. Six years later and noticeably aged, with sharpened nose and lined face, he is more soberly dressed in black, with a slash of white collar, and holds a brush to signify the dignity of his profession.

One of Titian's greatest religious paintings is *The Martyrdom of St. Lawrence.* "The scene of the martyrdom," Pedrocco writes of the third-century Roman, barbecued on a grill,

> is set in the deep obscurity of night, pierced by shafts of artificial light from the torches, by the illuminated temple in the background, and by the glow of embers under the gridiron on which the saint is stretched out; the light is reflected on Lawrence's body and those of his tormentors, and gleams on the armor of the soldiers. The saint turns toward the heavens as the clouds open to release a flood of divine light.

Titian's penultimate painting, the rarely seen *Flaying of Marsyas* in Kromeriz, Czech Republic, is even more cruel than St. Lawrence—and lacks the theme of a sure and certain hope of salvation. The tale from Ovid describes the Phrygian satyr and flautist who dared challenge Apollo to a musical contest. To punish his presumptuous pride, he is hung upside down by his hairy animal legs and skinned alive by two painstaking vivisectionists. The unspeakable brutality—a symbol for human suffering transcended by the power of great art—is intensified by two indifferent observers: a graceful violinist (Apollo or Orpheus) and a reflective King Midas, who judged the ill-fated competition.

A final masterpiece of sublime cruelty is *The Death of Actaeon* in London. In another Ovidian horror story, Actaeon, after seeing Diana bathing naked, is turned into a stag and torn apart by his own hounds. Iris Murdoch's pulsating and poetic description in *Henry and Cato* surpasses anything in Pedrocco's book:

> The immortal goddess, with curving apple cheek, her bow uplifted, bounds with graceful ruthless indifference across the foreground, while further back, in an underworld of brooding light, the doll-like figure of Actaeon falls stiffly to the onslaught of the dogs. A stream flashes. A distant horseman passes. The woods, the air, are of a russet brown so intense and so frightening as to persuade one that the tragedy is taking place in total silence.

Jeffrey Meyers' Inherited Risk: Errol and Sean Flynn in Hollywood and Vietnam *will be published next year by Simon & Schuster.*

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American Renaissance Man

by Bill Croke

American Character: The Curious Life of Charles Fletcher Lummis and the Rediscovery of the Southwest
by Mark Thompson
New York: Arcade Publishing;
372 pp., $27.95

◆

Charles Fletcher Lummis was born near Bristol, New Hampshire, in 1859 and received an extraordinary education at the feet of his father, Henry Lummis, an erudite Methodist minister. This homeschooling was so effective that, by the time young Charlie got to Harvard, he found that he had already read through its then-rigorous classics curriculum. Bored with his studies, he became a "campus prankster," which led to outrageous behavior that occasionally resulted in suspension. The unchastened rebel finally dropped out in his senior year, but not before striking up a friendship with another strong-willed undergraduate, Theodore Roosevelt.

Following a short stint as a reporter for the Chillicothe, Ohio, *Leader*, Lummis decided to make a national name for himself after landing a job at the fledgling *Los Angeles Times*. In September 1884, Lummis—newly married to Boston University medical student Dorothea "Dolly" Rhodes—set out alone to walk from Chillicothe to Los Angeles. The "tramp," as he called it, spawned widely reprinted newspaper dispatches written *en route* and, later in life, a book. The vagabond slept in railroad section houses, hunted antelope on the prairies, and crossed the Rockies in frigid weather. His 3,500-mile meandering journey took him four months. In Los Angeles, Lummis soon became the *Times*' overworked star reporter. Two years later, he suffered a breakdown that caused a temporary paralysis of his left arm and changed his life forever.

In 1886, Harrison Gray Otis—the mercurial publisher of the *Times*—sent Lummis to Arizona to cover the last phase of the Indian Wars, Gen. George Crook's pursuit of Geronimo in the Southwestern borderlands. Lummis's experience traveling with Crook and covering the Apache War only added to his love of the wide vistas of the Southwest. He had spent time in the New Mexico pueblos region while on his famous tramp and, after his 1887 breakdown in Los Angeles, returned to Isleta on the Rio Grande for an extended convalescence. Here, Lummis found his life's work and a happier marriage.

He became a much-demanded freelance writer, contributing articles about life in the Southwest to national publications, including the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *Century*, *Harpers*, and such newspapers as the *New York Tribune* and the *Los Angeles Times*. And he began to write the books that made his reputation: *A New Mexico David* (1891), *A Tramp Across the Continent* (1892), and *The King of the Broncos and Other Stories of New Mexico* (1897), among others. At the same time, Lummis divorced Dolly—now a successful Los Angeles physician—and married Eve Douglas, a brainy local schoolteacher. Their courtship coincided with the gradual disappearance of his mysterious paralysis.

Lummis quickly went from poverty to prosperity, thanks to his demanding work ethic. A typical 20-hour day consisted of mounting a horse and exploring Isleta and environs—hunting, fishing, inspecting archaeological sites, chatting with resident Indians—then staying up all night to write about it. He took up photography to increase his cachet with editors by submitting photographs (a new innovation practiced by few writers at the time) to accompany his endless stream of freelance pieces. He was the first photographer to record the secret ceremonies of the *Penitentes*, an obscure Catholic sect scattered throughout New Mexico and southern Colorado. Each year on Good Friday, they met to reenact the Crucifixion, sometimes so realistically that one of their number died from the ordeal. Lummis's pictures of the ritual—sanctioned by the *Penitentes* after diplomatic coaxing—appeared, along with a descriptive article, in *Cosmopolitan* in 1889.

Because of his connection with Isleta Pueblo, Lummis was active in Indian political affairs. He vigorously opposed—in courtrooms and in print—the practice of separating children from their parents and sending them to distant Indian boarding schools from which they were forbidden to return for vacations, cutting them off from family and their native culture for years. "Are the thoughtful of us so absolutely secure of the success of our civilization as to force it upon the unwilling?" he wrote. Later, Lummis's old friendship with President Theodore Roosevelt enabled him to influence progress in reservation reform; finally, however, the Interior Department's red tape hindered him more than Roosevelt's executive tenure could help him.

Lummis is probably best known as the editor of *Out West*, first titled *Land of Sunshine*. Initially founded as a promotional publication for the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, Lummis's tenure rapidly turned it into a first-rate monthly magazine of politics and culture, boasting such contributors as John Muir, John Burroughs, Ernest Thompson Seton, Joaquin Miller, and Jack London. In an American journalistic milieu that took its cue from the East, *Out West* was the first credible "Western" magazine. During his decade-long editorship, Lummis and his contributors took a clear-eyed view of the West that was free of dime-novel mythology. In his monthly column, *In the Lion's Den*, Lummis tackled such national and international issues as American foreign policy in Cuba and the Philippines. President Roosevelt was an enthusiastic reader.

One of Lummis's great passions—along with his wives, children, and work—was El Alisal, the small-scale stone castle he built near Los Angeles. His mostly solitary, part-time labor on the house occupied ten years of his life. He died of cancer there in 1928.

Bill Croke writes from Cody, Wyoming.

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Letter From Rockford

by Scott P. Richert

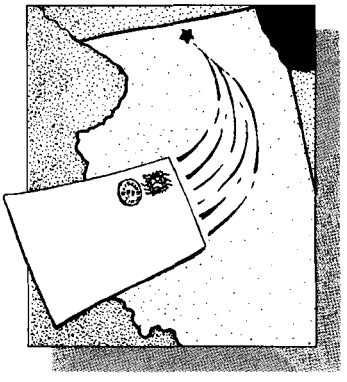
Death at the Wal-Mart

Rockford made the national news again in late May, when the wire services ran shocking headlines about a pregnant shoplifter gunned down by police at a local Wal-Mart. Talk radio buzzed with angry debates between those who congratulated the police on a job well done and those who couldn't understand how officers could possibly shoot (much less kill) a pregnant woman, even one who had drawn a gun on them. Once an autopsy showed that Laura Gassaway was not pregnant, however, the pro-life interest in the case apparently dissipated. Still, questions remained, not the least of which was why the two veteran cops who fired 23 shots at Gassaway from as close as four feet only managed to hit her 11 times, while the 33-year-old woman wounded three Wal-Mart employees with only four shots—while under fire, no less.

Noticeably absent from both local and national coverage of the Wal-Mart shootout were the calls for more extensive gun-control laws that follow every school shooting. That's because Illinois has fairly strict gun laws; since 1968, anyone purchasing a gun or ammunition has been required to show a Firearm Owner's Identification (FOID) card. As with all such legislation, the FOID Card Act is represented as protecting law-abiding citizens ("It is hereby declared as a matter of legislative determination that in order to promote and protect the health, safety and welfare of the public . . . ") and restricting the rights of felons:

> it is necessary . . . to provide a system of identifying persons who are not qualified to acquire or possess firearms and firearm ammunition within the State of Illinois . . . , thereby establishing a practical and workable system by which law enforcement authorities will be afforded an opportunity to identify those persons who are prohibited . . . from acquiring or possessing firearms and firearm ammunition.

Of course, those who are "not qualified" to own guns or ammo (because of conviction of a felony, addiction to narcotics, institutionalization for mental problems, mental retardation, illegal-alien status, or conviction of battery, assault, or violation of an order of protection) aren't required to carry a card or be registered in a central database; only those who *are* qualified are. Laura Gassaway was once issued a FOID card, which was revoked in 1991 for reasons that state authorities won't divulge. The gun that Gassaway used had been purchased legally while its owner was living in Texas. The owner's ex-boyfriend stole it and sold it to Gassaway; charged with unlawful use of a weapon by a felon and unlawful sale or transfer of a firearm, he was released on $3,500 bond. (Notably, he wasn't charged with theft.) Unfortunately, once the BATF traced the gun back to her, the owner was charged by police because she hadn't applied for a FOID card when she moved to Rockford. She was released on $1,000 bond, which seems remarkably high until we remember that, in the eyes of the state, the real problem isn't the theft of guns or their illegal use, but the simple fact of gun ownership by civilians. (The FOID Act makes exceptions for U.S. marshals, members of the Armed Forces and National Guard, federal employees required to carry guns as part of their duties, and law-enforcement officers "of this or any other jurisdiction . . . ")



Laura Gassaway appears to have been an unsavory character; she had a record of assault and battery going back at least seven years. But a case could be made that Illinois' gun-control laws contributed to the shootout at Wal-Mart. Growing up in Michigan, I often visited the sporting-goods aisle (right next to the toy section) at Meijer's, where boxes of ammo sat on open shelves next to a locked case containing shotguns and .22 caliber rifles. On a trip home over Memorial Day, I noted that the ammo still sits on an open shelf, though the locked case has been moved behind a counter at the end of the aisle. You don't need a FOID card to buy ammo in Michigan; the event that led to the shootout—Wal-Mart employees refusing to sell ammunition to Gassaway—would not have happened.

But if Gassaway had been able to buy bullets, wouldn't a greater tragedy have occurred? Perhaps—and perhaps not. The Wal-Mart shooting may simply have been (as local environmental consultant Luther Landon described it) "suicide by police." We'll never know. What we do know is that, on at least six occasions since 1994, Laura Gassaway could have been placed in prison, and the shootout could thus have been avoided. Four of those times, she received probation, and twice—in November 2000, when she was up on aggravated battery charges, and in July 1994, when she was charged with petty theft and illegal possession of a firearm—the cases were dismissed. If the representatives of the state really wished "to promote and protect the health, safety and welfare of the public"—or even just to protect Laura Gassaway from herself—they had plenty of opportunity to do it before she wounded three Wal-Mart employees and took 11 slugs. Requiring law-abiding citizens to hold a FOID card didn't prevent this tragedy; vigorously enforcing criminal laws might have.

I don't often praise Wal-Mart—in fact, I've never done so before—but for years, the chain has courageously resisted pressure to stop selling shotguns, hunting rifles, and ammo. In the wake of the Gassaway shooting, however, Wal-Mart's manager of community affairs for the Upper Midwest, John Bisio, seems to have succumbed to a fatalistic view of the relationship between guns and free will. As he told the *Rockford Register Star*, "'[W]e did our job . . . She didn't leave our store. She didn't leave our store with ammunition. We did the right thing. I can't emphasize that enough, when you think about what very well could have happened had this not been contained.'" "That's right," my wife remarked. "She might have shot three people." c

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Letter From Nevada

by Eddie Allen

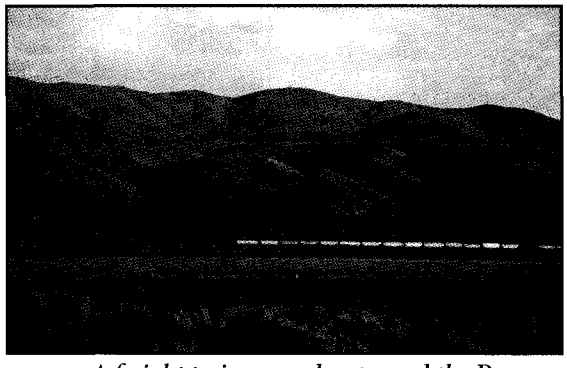
Still Riding the Rails

The only interruption in 32 hours of driving was a five-hour respite in a no-star motel somewhere in western Nebraska. Physically exhausted and emotionally inebriated by the nearness of the destination, I marveled at the sight of a Union Pacific freight train, eastbound, in the evening's final thrust of amber sunlight. It steadily snaked its way through a lush, green valley in preparation for its ascent of the Pequop Summit. The events of the next few days would etch that image into my mind.

An hour later, the parking lot of the Stockmen's Hotel and Casino in downtown Elko, Nevada, became the site of happy reunions and long-awaited introductions. The National Hobo Association's Rendezvous 2000 had attracted an unusual assortment of souls, all afflicted with wanderlust. They came to celebrate the history and folklore of the American hobo.

While hoboes nowadays are about as common as bowling-alley pinsetters, there are still a handful of remaining practitioners. Several arrived in Elko from all parts of the country as ticketless passengers on a national rail system that comprises an ever-decreasing number of companies. Omar, a youngish "knight of the road" who leads a life devoted to social activism, had set out from a Burlington Northern yard near the Mississippi River in Wisconsin. He was almost embarrassed to admit that he had to complete the last leg of his trip by bus. Busted by high-tech railroad "bulls" armed with strategically placed video cameras that spotted him crouched in the well of a "double stack" container car, Omar was promptly detrained and escorted from the property of the Union Pacific Railroad. Undaunted by the experience, Omar shrugged, "Things could have been a lot tougher than that. I've been treated plenty worse."

For many, the coming of the railroads in 19th-century America made the urge to ramble irresistible; economic downturns in the century that followed made it mandatory. The dominant representation of the hobo is still that of the down-and-out itinerant worker of the Depression era. More recently, grossly exaggerated horror stories of serial killers and vicious gangs riding the rails of America have had a calamitous effect on the public's perception of hoboes.



Ron Miles

A freight train meanders toward the Pequop Summit near Elko, Nevada.

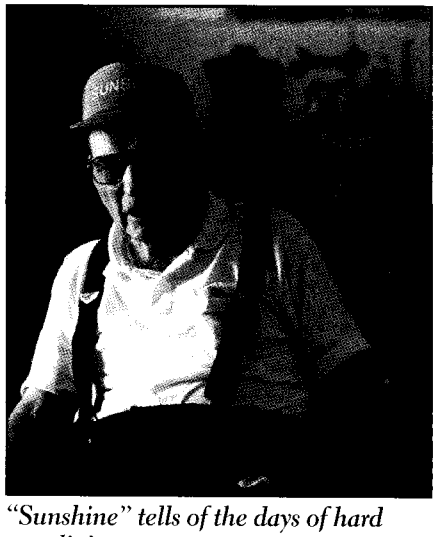
Those of us who gathered in this high-desert country in late July were given a more accurate view. One workshop, dealing with recent firsthand accounts and hosted by Bruce "Utah" Phillips, the hobo-*cum*-folk musician, quickly became a mentoring session. Utah (traditional hobo etiquette dictates that such monikers are the sole means of identification used among the 'bos) was joined by Luther "The Jet," who holds a Ph.D. in French literature.

They politely fielded the questions of a curious audience in the small exhibition hall of the Elko County fairgrounds. But it was apparent that their interest lay in a dialogue with about a half-dozen young hoboes carrying the layers of dust that they had accumulated *en route*.

"Never dangle your legs from an open boxcar door on a moving train," the experienced Phillips cautioned. He explained that braking even a slow-moving string of cars can cause the heavy door to slide shut quite quickly, with fatal results. He leaned forward from his perch on a folding chair. Hands, usually fisted and tucked inside the apron of his bib overalls, came out to animate his instructions. "Look around for an old spike and use a rock to lodge it tightly into the door track. And sleep with your feet facing the front of the train. In a quick stop, you might break your legs, which is no good. But it's better than a crushed skull."

After about an hour of "jawboning" on such matters, Phillips made a last call for questions in an effort to maintain some semblance of a schedule—something of a foreign concept—and a fellow who hadn't been shaving for very long sheepishly raised a hand. "What are we supposed to do about women?" he asked, in a nervous but sincere voice. As the crowd snickered, I braced myself for what seemed like a perfect opportunity for one of the quick-witted elder 'bos to crack wise. Instead, Phillips silenced the chucklers with a steely gaze. He turned to the young man and spoke, unashamedly, of the toll that wandering ways had exacted upon relationships in his own life. He was very candid in offering ideas more practical than many psychologists on dealing with the inherent perils of long-term separation between lovers.

The principal organizer of the event, Buzz Potter, edits and publishes the *Hobo Times*. The masthead of this official publication of the NHA boasts that it is "published periodically depending on available funds." An editorial policy clearly states that the *Hobo Times* does not encourage freight-train riding, a statement most likely advised by the head of



Tanya Henderson of the Western Folklife Center

"Sunshine" tells of the days of hard travelin'.

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Ron Miles

Mark Ross performs at the National Hobo Association Rendezvous 2000.

its legal-affairs department, listed as "No Bail" John. Potter's personal résumé reads like a great American novel. He first reached for the grab irons of a freight car at the tender age of 15. With his fascination and curiosity aroused by the view of a Utah canyon from a boxcar, he went on to study geology and mineralogy at universities in Minnesota, New Mexico, and Wisconsin. He panned for gold in the Western states and explored for minerals from Alaska to South America. Eventually, he founded a successful mineral-excavation business, Bluewater Mining, from which he retired in 1995. Now, he writes poetry and produces films and CDs about hobo lore and history.

Rendezvous 2000 was more than just an opportunity for railroad buffs, hoboes, former hoboes, and hoboes-at-heart to share experiences and reminiscences. It was also a music and poetry festival. Minnesota's Pop Wagner was the festival's artistic director as well as a performer. Widely recognized as one of America's premier folk artists, Wagner has performed similar duties for Elko's more famous Cowboy Poetry Gathering. With his thick mustache, he embodies the spirit of two of America's most cherished icons, the hobo and the cowboy.

Rik Palieri

Bruce "Utah" Phillips demonstrates how the resourceful hobo opens a wine bottle sans corkscrew.

While much of the credit for the stellar job of staging this event belongs to Wagner, the quality and quantity of talent on hand made the job easier. Featured performers included Utah Phillips, Rosalie Sorrels, Spider John Koerner, and Larry Penn.

Sometimes, and in some places, the wizardry that these veterans can conjure rubs off onto everyone else on the bill. That happened at Elko.

Marisa Anderson's red-hot guitar picking lit the fuse of an incendiary act called "dolly ranchers" (no caps, and they don't say why), four musicians from New Mexico whose music is as wild and free as the the hobo life.

Mark Ross is a 51-year-old kid from Butte, Montana, with slightly graying hair. If you scratch beneath the road dust on this guy, you can plainly see the vestiges of a ten-year-old, freckleface redhead with a cowlick who might easily have modeled for a Norman Rockwell painting. From beneath the sweat-stained brim of his ranger hat to his well-worn, shin-high, leather lace-up boots, Ross exudes an ingratiating, boyish charm in spite of the Camel Straight dangling from his lips.

Ross is committed to the persona he has created for himself. The rose tattoo on his arm bears the Latin inscription "*Mors ante servitium*." Its English translation: Death before work. He boasts of hitting the road at the tender age of 17. He was forced, he says, to leave his beloved cabin in the hills of New York City to look for work because of an illness in the family: "My parents were sick of me."

Ross plays no fewer than a dozen folk instruments proficiently and has a vast repertoire of songs and stories. Hosting a workshop dedicated to the songs of Woody Guthrie, he dazzled listeners with a jazzy rendition of the crowd-pleasing "Do Re Me." Before anyone had fully caught his breath, he launched into a moving rendition of "The Ballad of Tom Joad," complete with an historical account of how Guthrie came to turn a Steinbeck novel into a song. At one time or another, Ross was called upon to accompany nearly everyone on the bill. In each case, he performed flawlessly.

The surprising cast of characters at this gathering of hoboes included social activists, musicians, poets, Ph.D.'s, geologists, folklorists, anthropologists, and even a professor of economics. Each played an integral part in getting the rabbit into the hat for the magic that would make this festival more than worthy of the 32-hour drive. When I close my eyes, I still see that freight train. And I see it in a whole new light.

Eddie Allen writes from Trempealeau, Wisconsin, where he is known as the "Singer of the River."

Letter From Palermo

by Andrei Navrozov

In the Mafia

◆

A friend of mine just got arrested for arms dealing. From whom he was buying the arms, to whom he was selling them, or, indeed, whether he *ever* bought or sold any, I haven't the slightest idea. But the raid, by the Italian police and intelligence, on Sasha Zhukov's five-million-dollar villa in Piccolo Romazzino, on Sardinia's Costa Smeralda, made front-page news in London and in the Italian papers. It was in London, in fact, that we had first met, and a year later, Sasha came out to a dinner party in Venice in the company of his fiancée, a rather glamorous Miss Greece. (Too thin for my taste, mind you, but then again, with the Greeks, time is on your side.)

We were introduced by Galya Berezovskaya, whose ex, the Russian entrepreneur Boris Berezovsky, keeps an apartment in the same fortified enclave on London's embassy row where Sasha has a penthouse overlooking Kensington Palace. By way of a brief digression, the reader may as well hear what the vituperative Doubting Thomas and bilious helpmate of White Counterrevolution, the so-called writer and self-styled nonconformist Navrozov, is doing running around with people of that peculiar stripe. Would Louis Farrakhan choose to dine with *his* natural enemies? Would Norman Podhoretz pay for dinner? Is there no such thing as principle?

The answer is that, in the early 1980's, when Andropov's secret-police apparatus relaunched Beria's old plan for the restructuring of Soviet totalitarianism—to be marketed at home and abroad as the "fall of communism"—Russia's ruling junta needed a human face for their emerging system. Like an Identikit portrait, this was to be made up of a few predictable elements, including free elections to a legislative body (without any

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power), independent media with a material base controlled by the state, and unlimited business opportunities for those chosen to enjoy them. Not much in the way of verisimilitude, but if you are the president of a multinational corporation desperate to sell your country down the river, it's more than enough to bring round the stodgiest shareholder.

Anyway, punters like Berezovsky and Zhukov were among the lucky ones. I'm not saying that they had got a head start by keeping their distance from the secret police, or that they had been picked to play the part of entrepreneurs in the pantomime of Russian capitalism just because they had a firm handshake and an engaging smile. But by the time auditions were held, the specific loyalties of the men who were going to make up what would soon be popularly known as the "Russian mafia" hardly mattered. The premise was that a certain percentage of the country's wealth, say five percent, would be turned over to them—as had been done once before during the New Economic Policy of the 1920's—and their inborn greed, human vanity, and a modicum of effort would do the rest. In a matter of a few years, the simulacrum of capitalism in Russia would have a pockmarked but convincingly human face. As for controlling this mafia, since when does a 95-percent stakeholder worry about how to control the small fry?

So much for the digression, the point of which is that people like Sasha Zhukov are basically good fellows, living high on the hog, and endowed with a mentality very much like the lottery winner's. The only problem is that, like many lottery winners, they tend to reassess their lives *ex post facto*, reorganizing everything from kindergarten on into a logical chain of causes and effects that lead inexorably to the moment when they picked the right numbers and received their reward from the hand of fate. It never occurs to them that they are mere extras, expendable and replaceable, in a political production the likes of which the West has never dreamed possible. How could it ever occur to them? They take the West, with its Kensington penthouses and its Misses Greece, very seriously. So when they get taxed in Moscow, or shot in Cannes, or arrested in Piccolo Romazzino, they are very surprised.

The news of Sasha's arrest reached me at the Grand Hotel delle Palme in Palermo, where I have since decided to spend the coming summer. I had never visited Sicily before, and had it not been for the unexpectedly and fortuitously acquired friendship of the G—, a family of hereditary *Palermitani*, I would never have made the effort of tearing myself away from Venice at a time when the crab season was just beginning. Besides, like the Red Army of old, I only go where I am invited.

Alfredo G— brought me the day's *Corriere della Sera* with a happy smile on his face: "Friend of yours?" On seeing Zhukov's photograph next to the grim headline, I told him that I would normally regard the poor rich sucker as a passing acquaintance, but now that he was behind bars, and rather more probably put there by the hubris which is the nemesis of the lucky than by any real malfeasance, yes, I was more than happy to regard him as a friend. Afredo signaled his approval of my reasoning with a Masonic wink and, standing in a Palermo street and craning our necks like two *Superenolotto* savants scrutinizing the village-by-village distribution of the weekly jackpot, together we read the article.

The Milanese take on the news did not contain any references to arms smuggling, international intrigue, Russia, or the Balkans. The crux of the story was that, in August of last year, Sasha gave a party for 600 guests at his Sardinian love nest, where his immediate neighbors include Italy's George Bush, Silvio Berlusconi. Present among the celebrities were Alba Parietti (in American terms, roughly speaking, Martin Peretz trapped in the body of Vanna White), Prince Carlo Giovannelli (Taki Theodoracopulos minus the wit, I regret to say, as well as the charm and the money), Marco De Benedetti with his wife Paola Ferrari (Sonny & Cher, if Sonny had made three billion dollars selling mobile phones), Robero Cavalli (Italy's most feted fashion designer cannot have an American counterpart), and so on down the length of the Roman social edifice, which was decorated for the occasion with a number of "girls with crystal tattoos sent over by an escort agency in Milan" and topped with a vase "containing twenty-two kilos of Beluga caviar."

"I already told the television people I don't know anything about him," said one grandee, Ignazio La Russa, "so what do you want me to say? This story shouldn't be making the papers." "I don't really know who Signor Zhukov is," said another guest, Paolo Cirino Pomicino, "but why should I feel embarrassed? I was just there by chance. I came with friends. I was staying with Daniela Santanchè. . . . You know how she is, I always go where she tell me." In her turn, Daniela Santanchè told the *Corriere*: "No, we had no idea who the Russian was. You know how it is in the summer here, it's like a caravan, one group just follows another. We dropped by only for a few minutes." Supposed to have crowed thrice in the story, the cock of the Gospels was by now more like a galvanically oscillating dead frog.

"You see? That's your Venetians for you," muttered Alfredo. I tried to explain that the perfidious gobblers of free caviar were Roman, Milanese, Bolognese, anything but Venetian, that Venice was less responsible, from the strictly ethnographic point of view, for the complexion of Italy's *beau monde* than just about any other Italian city you could mention—all to no avail, because to Alfredo the distinction between any two places on the mainland, even as utterly dissimilar to the mainland dweller's mind as Rome and Venice, was dwarfed by their basic northernness, their cold and calculating northern baseness. If I had come from Florence, Alfredo would have said that leaving friends in a lurch was a Florentine trait. "They are all alike," he said. "*That* mafia. Not a grain of loyalty."

As for Palermo, I will have to wait and see.

Andrei Navrozov is Chronicles' *European correspondent.*

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—*from a press release*

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Letter From the Upper Midwest

by Sean Scallon

One Man's Idea Is Another's . . .

◆

Let's say you have an idea. Any old idea. No matter how big or small, grandiose or simple.

You naturally want to share that idea with someone, anyone, maybe no one. Maybe you want to keep it to yourself, fearing negative reaction. Or maybe you think your idea is so good, so great, so broad and encompassing that you have to share it, have to enlighten the rest of us with it, have to open the windows to your home and scream out "Hey, world, listen to me for a minute!"

An idea like that popped into my mind during a halftime conversation at a high-school girls basketball game between the Wisconsin hamlets Prescott and Spring Valley back in January 2000, as I fulfilled my duties as jack-of-all-trades reporter for the local weekly newspaper. Two dairy farmers were discussing the debate in Congress over the New England Dairy Compact, essentially an OPEC for Northeastern dairy farmers.

"How about forming a Midwestern dairy cartel?" I innocently asked.

They had a wondering kind of look on their faces, as if they had unearthed an archeological find and had no clue what it was—only they knew it was something.

"I don't know," said one. "It's something to think about doing. I wonder if it would work."

I did, too. In fact, the idea had been incubating for some time, and since the farmers didn't offhandedly reject it, I decided to investigate further, to create and engage opinion, to propose and hear others' reactions. Isn't that what the world of ideas is all about? Besides, it would make a good item for our paper in the heart of Wisconsin's dairy country.

Normally, small-town weeklies do not delve into something so deep, at least not before going through the local sports scores, crime news, school news, senior-center news, courthouse happenings, garden club minutes, 4-H notices, and, of course, obituaries. Once the workload for our overextended news staff of two died down, the project could commence.

Dairy has fallen into evil times. Not *hard* times: Milk, butter, cheese, and ice cream are being produced and sold like never before. The problem is the way it's being done: Assembly-line farms with over a thousand head of cattle lined up row upon row in milking stalls on concrete slabs in gigantic superstructures. No one milks by hand here, and no one calls a cow "Bessie" or "Bossie"—just No. 192 or No. 1102. It's all computerized, electrified, and humming along with globalist efficiency.

Such producers are wholly owned subsidiaries of agribusiness companies that have merged and morphed into larger and larger companies over the past decade. That's the way agriculture works nowadays. You can substitute hogs, corn, wheat, peanuts, soybeans, or sugar for dairy. Substitute grocery stores, hardware stores, office-supply stores, bookstores, record stores, pet stores, cafés, churches, or schools for agriculture, and you get an even clearer picture.

The Upper Midwest has also been hurt by the fact that we chose dairy as a lifestyle. Once upon a time, the business was our exclusive right; the gently rolling farmland and cool climate fit well with the Northern European preference for dairy. Back then, we let the regions of our country produce their own commodities: cotton and tobacco in the South, potatoes and apples in the Northwest, citrus in Florida, vegetables in California. Then a series of sometimes violent milk strikes in the 1930's almost cut off the milk supply to the rest of the nation. Farmers up here dumped their wares rather than sell at low prices. Finally, Franklin Roosevelt decided to teach us a lesson about the new power of the federal government.

Under the new federal system, the price farmers were paid for their milk increased the farther you moved away from the Upper Midwest; thus, dairy farms began to sprout up in places like Georgia and New Mexico, where they never were before. That, and the creation of refrigerated milk trucks, made dairy a nationwide industry. Even if Wisconsin farmers wanted to dump their milk to protest low prices today, they could only create a ripple in a much larger ocean.

Are Old McDonald and *American Gothic* a dying breed? Is the small farmer (like the small businessman everywhere) an anachronism waiting to be gobbled up by rapacious megas and chains? When they are gone, what will be left of their land and the towns, businesses, and schools they once helped to support in rural America? At least there will be plenty of space for new subdivisions and manure pits.

A manager for American Milk Producers Incorporated, a dairy cooperative in New Ulm, Minnesota, argues that the design of the free market "is to find the lowest possible price," which doesn't do the producer much good unless he's an employee of agribusiness, which sells on volume. It seemed to me the very premise of the debate about the New England compact was wrong. We should *encourage* dairy farmers to save their way of life, not try to stop them. If Congress and the courts upheld the compact, let us have a try. Besides, so much of agriculture is already wrapped in cartels anyway: sugar, oranges, peanuts, almonds. Why not dairy?

Our cartel would bring together 40,000 Upper Midwest farmers in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Northern Illinois to declare independence from federal milk orders, determining their own prices for a consumer market of over 30 million. The cartel could negotiate its own trade deals with the outside world and use the numerous university extension offices and ag schools for research and development to benefit small farmers instead of big corporations. Farmers could once again make money off the sweat of their brows. Young people wouldn't automatically abandon the land to fill up the suburbs. The cartel could be the basis for a whole new regional economy. Our destiny, ourselves.

Excited by the grandiose, I took my idea to the experts: a dairy economist, two farmers, a co-op manager, a university extension agent, and our own congressman. None thought it was good idea. Some gave logical reasons why: Only the most severe production controls could make the cartel work; farmers and their co-ops, being independent businessmen, would probably not join in; transportation and fuel costs, not federal milk orders, are what make prices outside the Midwest so high; the cartel could create surpluses that would lower prices even further; the plan wouldn't pass a Congress controlled by interests hostile to the Midwest. The closest anyone came to saying something positive was when the co-op manager argued that a cartel could only work on a national level.

Some of the reasons, however, came

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right out of the globalist hymnal: The cartel would be bad for free trade; we couldn't browbeat European farmers for open markets if we have local trade barriers ourselves; we wouldn't be able to import dairy products from New Zealand; it would not be in the spirit of NAFTA and GATT; other regions would form their own compacts, and—horror of horrors—regionalism might spread over the whole nation. Notably, these arguments came from the congressman and the university extension agent, already indoctrinated.

Still, I was undaunted. I wrote the story anyway—warts and all—and a hard-hitting editorial supporting the concept.

Unfortunately, my editor thought my story worthy of page 11 of that week's edition, after being bumped for a barn fire and a rollover accident involving an underage driver. Then, my publisher was unhappy that I used the words "treacherous globalist" and described the congressmen and agribusiness employees as "slaves."

I would not give up. My idea needed to reach beyond our 4,700 circulation to other newspapers in the upper Midwest. I e-mailed the story and editorial to hundreds of them. Some asked to use it; some asked me never to e-mail them again. But most of the replies came in the form of returns from addresses that no longer existed. Moreover, there were no telephone calls or letters to the editor from the public—one way or the other—on the issue. Nothing even from the congressman.

What did the silence mean? Was the idea still sinking in, or did nobody care? Was it still being thought out, or laughed off? As a lone reporter at a small newspaper in a town most have never heard of—and not really a recognized expert on the subject—I should have realized that it's too much to think I had the plan to save civilization as we know it, and that it would work, if only other people took me seriously. I had my idea, and they gave it a hearing. In a world full of ideas, that's probably the best I could do. The end result can only be judged in the distant future. Will my home and other rural areas of the Upper Midwest still have farms dotting their landscape, or tract housing? That will be the clincher.

There are signs of hope. Wisconsin's Dairy 2020 board, which provides state grants to struggling dairy operations, gave $800,000 of taxpayer money to five investors from New Mexico to start a 2,000-herd factory farm in Evansville, which is located in Rock County along the Illinois border. But the project was quashed by local residents. Closer to home, residents in nearby Martell Township voted to keep out any large dairy operation. They are now wrestling with the Pierce County board to keep their resolution intact. While neither case may have had anything to do with the proposed cartel, they both have something to do with preserving a way of life, which was my point all along.

Sean Scallon is a reporter who lives in East Ellsworth, Wisconsin.

Letter From Inner Israel

by Jacob Neusner

Gift of Finest . . . Rice?

◆

As a rabbi once accused of being "too soft on the Catholic Church"—liking Catholicism too much to make that particular Lutheran comfortable—I read with special sensitivity the report on a young girl and her family who left the Catholic Church for a liturgical reason, of all things.

According to the Associated Press, the young girl suffers from celiac disease, which causes her to get sick from eating gluten, a protein in wheat and other grains. She can safely eat rice. But Church law requires the Host to be made of wheat, so the family left the Church and went Methodist "where the rules on communion are more flexible because Methodists believe the bread and wine are symbolic, not the actual transubstantiated body and blood of Jesus." That's how the AP reported the case.

The Church's position is explained by a spokesman for the Boston archdiocese in this language: "Bread is central to the Eucharist because of the imagery of Scripture, because of the prayers of the Christian community going back thousands of years." The Vatican takes the matter seriously enough that, in 1994, it issued rules for all bishops to follow. Among them: "Special hosts (which do not contain gluten) are invalid matter for the celebration of the Eucharist." And, the AP continued, citing the parish priest involved in the case,

> "I think part of the problem is we are so accustomed to all these little round, pre-cut hosts we've lost any real sense we're taking part in one loaf," says the Rev. Austin Fleming, pastor of Our Lady of Christian Help Church in Concord. "We many are sharing one bread and becoming one with Christ. We can't make different flavors for different folks and maintain that theological reality."

Far be it from a rabbi to intervene in Catholic canon law and liturgy, but there is another explanation to consider. First, so the Church has always maintained, the Eucharist derives from the Last Supper, and the Last Supper corresponds to a Passover Seder. Now, as a matter of fact, matzah (the unleavened bread of the Passover Seder) can be prepared only from wheat or kindred grains of the same classification. To fulfill one's obligation to eat unleavened bread, the bread must be capable of leavening but not leavened, so Mishnah-tractate Pesahim 2:5: "These are types of grains through bread made from which a person fulfills his obligation to eat unleavened bread on Passover: (1) wheat, (2) barley, (3) spelt, (4) rye, and (5) oats." What the five grains have in common is that all ferment.

That doesn't tell the whole story. For what other activity is a grain that ferments required? The dough offering, taken from dough prepared from the same five species of grain, must be given while the dough is being prepared; if the dough is made from other species, however, a dough offering is not separated from the dough—it is exempt. What about rice? It is explicitly excluded, according to Mishnah-tractate Hallah 1:4: "The following are exempt from dough-offering: rice, sorghum, poppy, sesame, and pulse." What these have in common is obvious: They do not respond to the enzymes that engender life in the mixture of water and the flour of wheat, barley, spelt, oats, or rye. To this, Hallah 3:7 adds,

> One who makes dough from a mixture of wheat flour and rice flour—if . . . the dough has the taste of cereal wheat, it is subject to dough offering. And a person fulfills his obligation to eat unleavened bread

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on Passover by means of eating it. But if it does not have the taste of cereal, it is not subject to dough offering. And a person does not fulfil his obligation to eat unleavened bread of Passover by means of eating it.

Wheat flour differs from rice in the fundamental way already noted: Wheat sustains the natural processes by which life commences and is sustained. Fermentation starts when water is mixed with flour and yeast and ends when the dough forms a crust, the enzyme in the yeast having died in the heat of the baking. The Halakhah emerges at the end of a long process of profound thought on the nature of life processes. Its message is simple: When the enzyme is activated with the addition of water to the flour and the fermentation process has begun, the obligation to separate a dough offering is incurred and must be met at the end, when the enzyme dies and the fermentation process concludes. I cannot think of a more vivid way of linking the obligation to separate a dough offering to the fermentation process. Such a process must be possible, and it must be under way. Then the consideration of God's share in the dough registers. Or to put it somewhat materially, when the flour is brought to life by water and yeast, then God's claim on the bread registers. The dough, when alive and expanding, encompasses a share belonging to God, which is to be removed and given to the priest.

What all this has to do with making the Host of wheat should be obvious, and it is not mere custom but *theological truth*. If I had to explain on behalf of the archdiocese of Boston why the Host must be made of wheat flour, I would not stop with appeals to Scripture and prayer. These are true but too general, and they are not specific to the case.

Rather, I would seize upon the substance of the issue, which consists, in my opinion, of two parts: First, the Host is explicitly unleavened bread, because that is how Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper. The definitive trait of unleavened bread, broken "in memory of Me," is that it derives from wheat, which can be leavened but *has not* been.

Second, the Host is made of wheat because wheat ferments and contains the mystery of life, represented by the working of the enzyme on the flour and water. From there, the lesson follows: the Host is the source of life not in a symbolic way but in a real one, as the Catholic Church has always maintained. The Halakhah of Judaism (in its context and for its reasons) concurs in the logic that requires the dough offering given to the priests and the matzah eaten at the Passover Seder to be made of a grain that participates in the processes of fermentation—that is to say, life.

Jacob Neusner is research professor of religion and theology at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

Letter From Bogota

by Brian Kirkpatrick

Condescension Slides South

◆

I'd forgotten that a Barnes and Noble bookstore had opened in the old department store building. As I walked back to my car in the Baltimore suburb of Towson, I remembered what I'd seen in the other bookstore closer to home, so I changed my path a little, pushed open the heavy door, and headed for the international travel section.

An entire wall of alphabetized guidebooks rose above me. In the Latin American section, I found Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba. Thirty million people, beaches, mountains, wild orchids, rain forests, a lively and varied musical tradition—*it wasn't there*. I started over and searched again, more slowly this time. They had Antigua, Argentina, Belize, Ecuador—the book covers always mention the Galapagos, to pull in the tourist with a scientific bent—Jamaica, Venezuela. One book, entitled "Latin American Beaches," had a brief chapter on Cartagena. Beyond that, nothing.

If I told my friends I was going to France, Spain, Italy, or even India, they would smile; they would understand; they wouldn't ask why. When I returned, they would want to hear about my escapades and see the pictures. We would swap stories about that quaint, inexpensive little place in the fifth Arrondissement, the new exhibition at the Reina Sofia museum, or the food on British Airways. I would have a reputation as a charming, sophisticated man of the world. Instead, they think I'm nuts.

I've learned not to tell them I'm going to Colombia. They react as if I had said, "I'll be spending my vacation at the city dump." They struggle to smile, but they can't think of anything polite to say. The more honest among them blurt out, "Why?"

I've sulked and thought of the wicked fun I could have if I asked my friends pointed questions about their prejudice against short, dark people. They're a rather politically correct crowd, and I'm sure they'd squirm. Instead, I've tried to defend my choice. I start with Gabriel Garcia Marquez, a Colombian from the Atlantic Coast, then I trot out the touristy list. I tell them that, in the Street of the Esmeralderos, men in suits stand on the sidewalk and show you loose emeralds wrapped up in waxed paper, their bodyguards' eyes glued to your hands and the gleaming chips of green. Outside Bogota, you can walk a quarter-mile into the side of a mountain; the ceiling opens above you, and you're among the statues and candles of the Catedral de Sal, an immense church carved out of an abandoned salt mine. Worried about what you'll eat? In Colombia, the stores and restaurants are filled with wonderful fruits you've never heard of, bananas that taste the way they're supposed to taste, and a brand of fruit juices that are to the boring stuff back home as a beautiful, affectionate Latina is to a tough American female lawyer. This isn't a place for a tourist?

My friends don't think so. In the United States, condescension slides south so easily. The few who know a little about Colombia ask that question that's so difficult to answer: "Isn't it dangerous?" I dread that one because it *is*, and Colombia doesn't let you forget it. Private security guards stand with rifles in front of stores, and boys of 18 and 19, drafted into the army, patrol the city streets carrying automatic weapons and eyeing you suspiciously. If you want a cab, your hotel will suggest you let them call the company. On the phone, they'll establish a code with the dispatcher, and the cabbie won't want to take you anywhere until you give it to him. Last year, in a wealthy suburb of the big city of Cali, a group from one of the guerrilla movements (yes, there's more than one) swept into a church one Sunday and kidnapped the entire congregation. The current administration ceded the guerrillas a huge tract of land—inevitably termed "the size of Switzerland"—in vain hope of making

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progress toward peace. The enormous flow of drug money incapacitates the government, because a bureaucrat willing to look the other way for the drug lords can become rich; if he's unwilling, he's likely to become *dead.*

When people travel to a foreign land, the beauty, intelligence, sadness, and humor of human life seem so penetratingly clear that they return to their normal lives more alive. I could get that renewal in Italy or France, but Colombia does much more: She whispers secrets in my ear that apply to more than just her lovely, unhappy self. The homeless children beg in the airport; kidnapping has become almost commonplace; the economy has declined while much of the world has enjoyed a boom: Still, normality struggles to assert itself amidst the chaos and evil. People worry about their children, make plans for their vacation, and try to get tickets to that concert next Saturday. In the midst of a multilateral civil war, they hold elections, and journalists demand that both the paramilitary bands and the guerrillas respect the rule of law. The journalists may disappear or turn up dead, but others take their places.

When an American in Bogota asked a woman he trusted where he could exchange his dollars for *pesos*, she directed him to the office next to hers in an elegant building. He blithely entered a tiny room with a partition, where three tense-looking young men quickly gave him *pesos* and a small printout from a calculator, saying nothing during the transaction. Only later did it occur to the American that maybe all of this wasn't, well, quite legal. He asked his friend—a respectable, conscientious woman—if she thought those quiet, young men were *narcotraficantes*. Probably so, she said; certainly, it was a money-laundering operation. She spoke calmly, as if such a thing next door to her office were quite unremarkable.

In Colombia, enlightenment could descend on the battered old car in the middle of Cali where I talked to two women, both schoolteachers, as we drove through a rich neighborhood. One of them gestured at the houses around us: This was where the *mafiosos* lived. She was referring to the clan that once, according to the U.S. government, controlled 85 percent of the world's cocaine trade. I sputtered and asked the other woman if my leg were being pulled. "Oh no," she said calmly. "Everybody knows that."

For a moment, my sense of being in an alien land was so overwhelming that it simply burned out. I realized that there were neighborhoods in New York, Washington, or Los Angeles where I could have the same exchange with a native. My city also has drug lords who live in ostentatious wealth and murder anyone who gets in their way. In my prosperous neighborhood, teenage boys stand on the curbs late at night, looking expectantly at passing cars, hoping to make another sale of heroin or cocaine. In my country, the government pays unmarried teenage girls to have babies, our children murder each other in their classrooms, and little learning takes place even in the more peaceful schools. Our politicians spend their time posing and trying to score points off each other, and last year, three of the four men with any chance of becoming president were the sons of senators or presidents. In the midst of our own drug war, violence, and corruption, we think our lives quite normal, ignore the terror, and go on as if it all were happening far away, and to some other people.

Why would anyone visit America? Isn't it dangerous?

Brian Kirkpatrick writes from Baltimore, Maryland.

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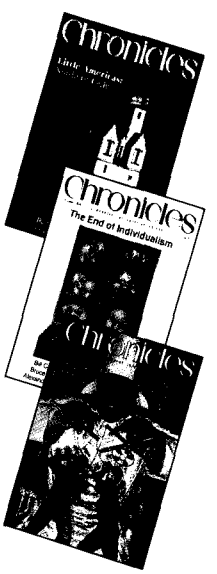

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by Srdja Trifkovic

Averting War With China

No foreign-policy issue facing the United States is more important than our long-term relationship with China, the most populous nation and the fourth-largest country on Earth. If we think in terms of uninterrupted statehood, China is the oldest nation-state, accustomed to taking the long view in foreign affairs. More significantly, if its present rate of economic growth continues unabated, it may become the second most powerful country in the world within a generation.

It is, therefore, as puzzling as it is frightening that the notion of an inevitable war with China is gaining credence in Washington, D.C. It is being discussed within the "Blue Team"—a loose coalition of hawkish neoconservative advisors, think-tank analysts, and lobbyists—with the same cool detachment that characterized German considerations of a "preventive war" against Russia before August 1914. "We did not will this," the kaiser murmured despondently four years later, as he surveyed Europe's smoldering ruins and his empire followed that of Czar Nicholas into demise. He was wrong: Not acting to avoid war is tantamount to "willing" it, just as the absence of specific murderous intent does not absolve reckless drivers of homicide. This message seems to be lost on the Bush administration as it pursues a policy that seems designed to provoke a violent confrontation between the United States and China within the next decade.

Almost 30 years ago, President Nixon accepted China's conditions for the establishment of diplomatic relations. The United States withdrew recognition of Taiwan as the "Republic of China" and pulled its troops from the island. In the famous Shanghai Communiqué brokered by Henry Kissinger, Washington accepted that "all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China." This was followed by Jimmy Carter's 1979 communiqué in which the United States recognized Beijing as "the sole legal government" of China. Finally, in Alexander Haig's 1982 communiqué, the Reagan administration pledged to reduce arms sales to Taiwan.

Nixon, Carter, and Reagan—a "realist," an "idealist," and a Cold Warrior shared an appreciation of China's importance in world affairs and acted accordingly. Their decisions did not imply an endorsement of China's communist regime. They reflected the American interest in establishing a working relationship with a major power. The three communiqués were political acts, and thus imperfect, but for decades, they have provided a viable, bipartisan basis for Sino-American relations.

April's 11-day crisis following the emergency landing of an American spy plane on Hainan after the collision with a Chinese fighter led to a radical alteration of the Nixon/Carter/Reagan policy. Throughout the standoff, President Bush was under mounting pressure to escalate the conflict. Leading Republicans in Congress—including Richard Shelby, chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, and Henry Hyde, chairman of the House International Relations Committee—began referring to the spy plane's crew as "hostages." The President nevertheless ended the deadlock by declaring that he was "very sorry," while insisting that he was not apologizing.

This alleged disgrace threw the Blue Team into a fit of rage. Sen. John McCain greeted the release by denouncing

> the Chinese policy of dangerously challenging our lawful and essential surveillance flights in international airspace over the South China Sea. We must avoid, at all costs, giving Chinese leaders the impression that they will profit by challenging America's global responsibilities.

The April 8 *Weekly Standard* featured a lead commentary by William Kristol and Robert Kagan headlined "A National Humiliation." They called for full-scale retaliation, including a curtailment of trade relations, massive arms transfers to Taiwan, and opposition to holding the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

The administration needed little prodding. Once the plane's crew was stateside, President Bush declared that the United States would do "whatever it took to help Taiwan defend itself." He also said that he wanted to extend the Theatre Missile Defense System to cover Taiwan—essentially reviving the defense treaty that had been defunct since 1979. The administration announced that it would sell submarines, destroyers, missiles, and electronic equipment to Taiwan, although this decision violates both the spirit and the letter of Al Haig's subsequent pledge to reduce arms sales. It is also at odds with the domestic law—the Taiwan Relations Act—that restricted sales to defensive weapons.

The subsequent decision to allow Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian to meet U.S. congressmen during stopovers in the United States amounted to granting Taiwan semi-official status, in violation of the "one China" commitment. Almost simultaneously, Mr. Bush received the Dalai Lama at the White House on the anniversary of China's occupation of Tibet. And Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld recommended that the United States' strategic focus be shifted from Europe to Asia and admitted that the proposed missile-defense system was meant to counter the threat from China, not just from such "rogue states" as North Korea and Iran.

Secretary of State Colin Powell suggested that Japan should help defend Taiwan and asked for Japanese help in building eight submarines that the United States had promised to sell to Taiwan. But Japan, and other U.S. allies in the Pacific, remained distinctly aloof. The chill in Washington's relations with Beijing coincided with the rise to power of Junichiro Koizumi, a tough and popular nationalist politician who has made it clear that he would not be subservient to Washington. As soon as he won the premiership, Koizumi appointed Makiko Tanaka, the daughter of Kakuei Tanaka (Japan's controversial prime minister of the 1970's), as his foreign minister. One of Tanaka's first moves was to declare that the time had come to review America's use of military bases in Japan. She also made it clear that Japan wanted peace and relaxed relations between China and Taiwan.

So far, the response from Beijing has been muted. Chinese President Jiang Zemin was careful to put immediate con-

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flicts in perspective, stressing the wider relationship, including trade, which earned China an $84-billion surplus with the United States last year. In the short term, China will refrain from strong reactions, just as it did after the "accidental" bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade in 1999. It will grin and bear it, while pursuing aggressive economic growth and embarking on a steady military buildup in cooperation with Russia. This is in line with the late Deng Xiaoping's policy of *tao guang yang hui*: Hide your real strength to buy time for your development.

The Chinese know that the readiness of the Bush administration to provoke China and its desire to keep it in check is coupled with Washington's complete unwillingness to limit commerce with Beijing or to use trade as a tool of policy. This is the fundamental contradiction of the United State's China policy, reminiscent of our ambivalent relationship with Japan between the two world wars. Beijing rightly assumes that America will prove too greedy to refrain from giving China's rulers the tools they need to assert eventual regional primacy. They were greatly heartened when China was granted permanent normal trade relations status by Congress last year, giving it unconditional and unlimited access to the American market. In addition, far from rebuilding and defending the industrial foundations of its national security, corporate America is eagerly transferring those foundations across the Pacific.

Top Chinese politicians will not state openly what economist Wang Jian of the State Planning Commission in Beijing concluded in a recent interview: "Unless the Chinese split themselves, I don't see how the United States can frustrate our national goals." Those goals unequivocally include reunification. The "one China" principle is an issue over which Beijing will fight: If it wavers over the status of Taiwan, its hold over Sinkiang, Tibet, or even Manchuria may become tenuous. China's consistency on this point is a matter not of its status as a great power but of its survival as a state.

On the other hand, it is unclear what the "national goals" of the United States in and around China are. The Blue Team refers to "essential" surveillance flights and invokes America's supposed "global responsibilities," but behind the global-hegemonist rhetoric, there is only one real question: Is any vital American interest involved in who rules Taiwan? Should America be ready to go to war to prevent China from establishing control over its island province?

For over 50 years, the Chinese nationalist Kuomintang Party (KMT) ruled Taiwan, having retreated there in 1949 after Mao Zedong's Communists defeated Chiang Kai-shek in the civil war. The KMT old guard regarded the island as an integral part of China and clamped down on any display of Taiwanese particularism, let alone separatism. By the early 1970's, the claim of the "Republic of China" to represent the only legitimate Chinese government was no longer taken seriously by the rest of the world, and most Taiwanese appeared more interested in economic prosperity than in forcing the issue of their island's ambiguous status. Chiang's successors in Taipei could agree with Mao's successors in Beijing on one critical issue: They were all living in the same country and, therefore, an eventual reunification was desirable and inevitable. This accord provided the basis for an uneasy but manageable *status quo*. But in March of last year, the separatist Democratic Progressive Party, supported mostly by the native Taiwanese, won the presidential election and changed the equation. Although President Chen Shui-bian has toned down his pro-independence rhetoric over the past year and a half, the latest tension in Sino-American relations may encourage Taiwanese separatists to conclude that they would remain under an American security umbrella even if their actions present an intolerable challenge to Beijing.

Taipei should be disabused of any notion that America will risk its soldiers' lives—let alone its West Coast cities—for the sake of Taiwan's final status. George W. Bush's pledge to provide "whatever it [takes] to help Taiwan defend itself" must be qualified, because permanent American security guarantees to distant countries are a bad idea in principle—and Taiwan is not even a country. The character of the regime in China is irrelevant here: Risking an all-out war with it over the way one of its provinces is governed is plainly ludicrous. Confucius says, "He who gives no thought to difficulties in the future is sure to be beset by worries much closer at hand." The United States must not paint itself into a corner and face the choice between a humiliating retreat and an unpredictable military escalation that may lead to nuclear exchange. If such escalation takes place, not a single country in East Asia will side with America. Tokyo will provide the cue for South Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines by declaring neutrality and annulling the present military alliance with Washington. This would irrevocably alter the regional balance to America's disadvantage.

China will be a "threat" to the United States only if America continues to make China its business. Just as Great Britain realized that it could not jeopardize its commercial and security interests by trying to dictate the formula for Hong Kong, the security of the United States must not be made dependent on the resolution of the Taiwan issue. Only by disentangling itself from its many "global responsibilities"—from the Middle East to Korea, from the Balkans to the Baltics—will the United States regain its ability to define a strategic doctrine based on its true interest and a foreign policy that balances rational objectives and the limited resources used in their pursuit.

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—From the Introduction by William Murchison
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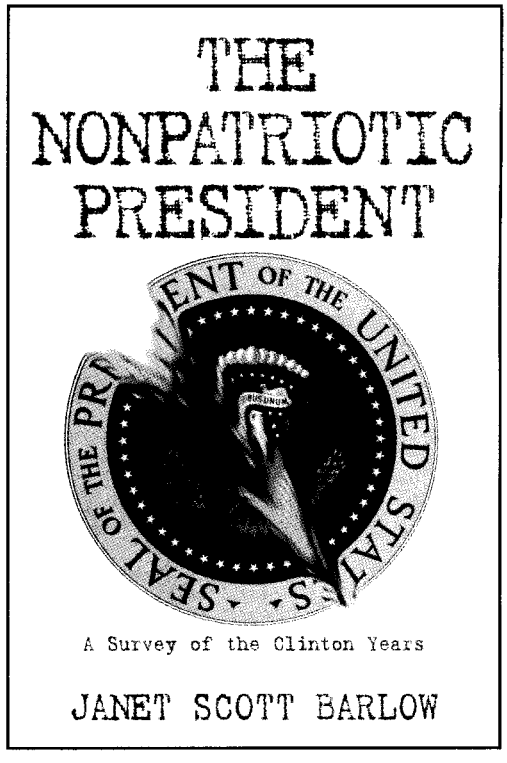

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MANNERS

"We Say Grace, We Say Ma'am . . ."

by William Murchison

The news descended with crushing force: I must be getting *really* old. Rising from the dinner table, I had pulled back my wife's chair, and our waiter *complimented* me. He complimented me for the kind of civil and reflexive action to which my generation was bred in the post-World War II years? Ah, yes; he said he didn't see that sort of thing much anymore.

Brothers and sisters, this was Texas—the Old/New South. The restaurant in question caters to the better sort, as this clientele was known in less egalitarian times. Our waiter "doesn't see" things like men pulling out ladies' chairs for them? Probably not, I guess. As I said, I'm getting old. (To cinch the point, I can remember when Rosemary Clooney was bigger than Elvis.)

Granted, manners—like mores—have been in decline probably since the sweeping bow—plumed hat in hand, left leg extended—went by the boards. The kind of 20th-century civility to which I was bred, 40 years ago, might have disgusted the truly gentle men of President Washington's day. They might have supposed the thing we needed most—we greased-up swains in our white sport coats—was a good hiding with a malacca cane. They might have been right—notwithstanding the great rule of life that you do your best with what you have.

What we had in the South, in the 1950's, was a quaint, very much inherited, notion: a notion of relationships. It is likely we never expressed it just so, but that is what it came to—relationships; touchings, bumpings, scrapings; intersections of every sort. For all of us, there were, not laws, not statutes and commandments, but guidelines. The guidelines were called "manners."

"What happened," you ask? I'm curious, too. Why don't we think this thing through? A waiter smilingly commends a customer—and not yet an elderly one, either!—for pulling out his wife's chair. This says to me that relationships between men and women (not to mention those between customers and waiters) are not what they were, and thus the guidelines for those relationships have also changed—less so in my Southland than elsewhere, but I'll get back to that.

It has to be feminism—the thing we males, with calculated offensiveness, once called "women's lib." That's what did it. Feminism made a comeback—as you will recall, in our history, feminism has ebbed and flowed—somewhere around 1970, when everything else seemed to be falling apart. Feminism embodies, among other things, the notion of women as an oppressed class. The distinctiveness of women was a thing we all had understood and most had valued: women especially. That was not feminism's point. The point was, we men had exploited that distinctiveness; by—allegedly—putting women on pedestals, by bowing and scraping to them, and praising their feminine attributes to the skies, we had, in effect, disabled them in their grand quest to lead lives just like our own. In 1963, Betty Friedan wrote of the "problem that has no name," whose nature was that "American women are kept from growing to their full human capacities." Among the consequences she enumerated were alcoholism, emotional breakdown, and suicide.

All because we held chairs and rose to our feet when women entered the room? In the years that followed, it came to seem so. Manners undermined opportunity and growth and fulfillment. The womenfolk would open their own doors, plunging through them to joyous fulfillment, slamming them in the faces of the male louts who didn't "get it."

Manners, everywhere and always, depend on degree and distinctiveness. But these were the very attributes our culture was trying to wipe from the face of the earth—with regard to women, at least. Listen, a woman could drive a tank if she wanted to. She could direct a motion picture or climb Mt. Everest. She could argue a case before the Supreme Court—or hear and decide that case with solemn deliberation. She could lead a Fortune 500 company. She could mobilize the village it takes to raise a child. Don't come around here bothering a woman with minor attentions like pulled-out chairs, you patronizing pig! At the dinner table, our brave new woman was just as likely as the man—likelier, perhaps—to grab the check when it arrived, icily assuming that command she and her sex had for so long been denied. Dainty, white-gloved manners! Grrrrrrr!

There we are, and I'm not sure we are going back any time soon—not in my own lifetime, I feel mournfully confident. But we're entitled to evaluate the results.

One thing the feminist revolution has cost us is that measure of grace which manners bring to such societal transactions as sitting down and rising. Manners coordinate these routine actions in a kind of corporate way: a team effort, as it were, two working as one.

Plop—according to the modern ideal—goes one diner; then *plop* goes another. The next thing you know, out come the cell phones. Onto the tabletop go the elbows. The evening is off to a very bad start.

I hate to press this particular point too hard, because when one of you can't wait to get in that tank and start blasting away with the machine gun, human coordination at the table seems a minor matter. But "seems" is the operative word. There is much more to this. It's the relationship thing.

"Relationship" is one of those modern buzzwords that leach the meanings from the ideas they embody. It signifies, to many, that, hey, we're a couple—or something like that. But what does that *mean*? A pair who split the rent and the utilities, or two who move as one: man holding chair, woman seating herself? The latter is the ideal, because the *marital relationship* is the ideal, the goal toward which every human relationship is supposed to point: one flesh, one life, one destination. This is the divine symmetry, if I may coin a phrase. It is that for which we were formed. Manners is a means—not the only means, clearly, but an important means—of attaining to that blissful, honorable, and holy end.

We seem to be getting theological here. Yes, and why not? The problems of the modern world aren't political or economic; they're theological. The ulti-

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mate relationship problem is Man-to-God-to-Man, and what to do about it.

It is a large claim to make for table manners (which, in any case, are just one branch of a large code of practice); nevertheless, I make it. A show of coordinated respect for the smallest of relationships—man to woman, woman to man—trains the actors as they ascend the great pyramid of larger, always larger, relationships. The last of these is said to have something to do with a great Seat of Judgement—a prospect our present culture seems to find uncongenial. (Judgment? The drawing of distinctions? Black and white instead of woolly, forgiving gray? Shudder!)

For illustrative purposes, let me turn the matter around. Over time, as one individualized *plop* follows another at the dining table, and cell phones emerge from pocket and purse, and eyes stare vacantly across the table, you have the seeds not of relationship but of relationship *disintegration*. A relationship requires some acting out—some physical observance (vertical as well as horizontal). Manners provides the stage directions.

You see, perhaps, where this takes us. Manners undermine raw, rank, whoops-my-cell-phone-is-ringing individualism. Nor do manners have collectivist implications. Nobody *makes* you curb your solipsism; you feel led to do so. The stage directions seem persuasive—even, perhaps, appealing.

Naturally, feminism—which seeks to unleash and empower the individual woman—sees manners as a conspiracy, a means of foreclosing rather than broadening choice, a breeding ground for dependency. What is it that makes us Southerners more resistant to this strain of the modernist virus? People from "up North" and "out West" remark on our greater capacity—compared to their own, they mean—for acknowledging relationships through the display of once-ordinary courtesies. Often, attempting to describe it, these outside admirers warmly praise Southern "friendliness."

Not bad, really. Friendliness is a subset of manners, a show of warmth one may not particularly feel just at the moment. Friendliness, in such cases, exists for relational purposes, deeply and sincerely felt. It amounts to brotherly or sisterly consideration: the desire that another should feel comfortable and duly affirmed. Raw individualism retreats, at least temporarily, from view.

Southerners seem somehow to have held onto this viewpoint with greater tenacity than other Americans—that is, when they aren't waving around the Confederate Battle Flag (the principal preoccupation ascribed to them by the national media). It could properly be asked: "Why the South?" Why not Maine or North Dakota?

I don't mean to impeach the manners of Mainers and North Dakotans; all I mean to suggest is that the South's well-known bent for Protestant theology may be the main underpinning of its bent for manners. Not for nothing do they call us the "Bible Belt." Our relationship with the Lord takes on personal aspects that undergird the higher—not the lower—view of human interconnectedness and put a lower, not a higher, premium on isolation and individualism and solipsism than do other regions.

The question, obviously, is open to debate: Resolved, that a region where waiters are surprised to see a man assist his wife with her chair is homogenizing itself. I could argue for the affirmative or the negative. Clearly, we ain't what we used to be. Who is? The point on which to bear down is that theology—the highest of human matters—maintains a presence here. So long as it maintains that presence, Southerners will take some care with relationships.

I would warn that this care, while seeming inbred, needs cultural reinforcement. We are losing our cultural reinforcement—as our waiter's testimony to me might affirm. Men don't stand automatically when a woman comes into the room. At the table, they don't rise automatically, as they once did, when a lady rises. Check-grabbing by women in business situations—one of the dreariest feminist manifestations—has done more than anything else I know of to bolster the feminist agenda of "We're All Exactly the Same Here."

The hell we are, Southerners affirm, if a little more weakly under the bombardment we sustain from *People* magazine, *The Sopranos*, and Britney Spears. A number of us, having said "hell," would gulp just a little if the company were mixed. There remain inhibitions about references to the devil's place of abode, and about similar (not to mention *worse*) words.

Yes, theology again, you might say: the theology of relationships in a fallen world where we do well to spurn disconnectedness and attitudes that say to others, "I don't give a damn about you."

There I go again. Good Southerner that I am (and hope to remain), may I say to the ladies reading these words, "Ma'am, I do most earnestly beg your pardon"?

William Murchison is a nationally syndicated columnist for the Dallas Morning News.

Calculated Acts of Goodness

by David B. Schock

How could this be? In a Catholic school? Here? This is what they're teaching our kids? I stopped, transfixed.

I had parked my car and sauntered into the Catholic middle school in search of my son. I was about to turn down the hall that led to his math class when I was struck by one of the big posters that lined the wall. I stared—no, glared—at the offending display.

There, in vivid orange, was the admonition to "Practice Random Acts of Kindness."

My first response was to consider a random act of my own. But that would be vandalism, not the kind of lesson I hope to impart to the rising generation. If I were going to fight, I'd have to do it with words.

The movement to practice random acts of kindness began as a message scrawled on a placemat. Then, in 1993, there was a book entitled (what else?) *Random Acts of Kindness*—sort of an everybody-gets-to-write-something kind of publication. Then came the popularization of the phrase.

What mass appeal! Ann Landers espouses it; bumper stickers on thousands of cars promote it; I've even seen a big billboard that trumpets the philosophy. And here it was on the wall at my son's school, right next to "Jesus loves us." But I'm having none of it.

In the first place, those who suggest this practice cannot know what they're asking. I suppose that most are guilty of nothing more than lazy thinking: They want something nice to happen to somebody sometime.

Even one of the book's creators admits that she is not altogether happy with the idea of using the word "random." There's something wrong with it; she's

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taken to calling it the "R word." But she didn't have the time to come up with another word—and besides, it was euphonic. (Maybe what she meant was that it would *sell*.)

Too late; whether she likes it or not, words can take on a life of their own.

And random means *random*. My unabridged and certainly non-random Random House Dictionary defines the word as "without definite aim, reason, or pattern." There's no reason, then, why we shouldn't treat Polly Klass's killer to a night on the town, a good steak, and his freedom; random would certainly include him. Why shouldn't we reward drug pushers with college scholarships? Or better yet, bring them home for a nice chat so they can strike up a friendship with the kids?

Any society that finds randomly rewarding others desirable is in real trouble. It is made up of the same sophists who sport T-shirts that read: "S--t Happens."

Sure it does. But so does grace. And so do mercy, understanding, and—if we're lucky—wisdom.

The idea that practicing random acts of kindness is fitting presupposes that we have neither the intelligence nor the right to encourage, reward, or celebrate those who deserve or need our aid. The flip side, of course, is that we also should not use our powers of discrimination to shun bad people, or, at the very least, look long and hard before aiding them (barring rescue from physical peril).

That would mean that we would be judging others, and who are we to sit in judgment? Doesn't the Bible say to judge not, lest we be judged? This judgment thing is scary. After all, it's possible we'll make mistakes. We might not always be able to tell a good thing from a bad thing, or a good person from a bad one.

It is true that sometimes we're stupid, flawed, uninformed, and morally stunted; we do make bad decisions. However, our human condition should be regarded as a *privilege*, not an excuse. We should do what people have always done: Make the best decisions and choose the best courses under what T.S. Eliot called "conditions that seem unpropitious."

The idea that we ought to leave our decisions to randomness is a sign that we're in trouble. The inability to judge, to decide, highlights the absence of shared goals and values. Our eyes are no longer on the prize—any prize. In fact, there no longer is a prize; we now believe there probably never was one. There is only the ongoing process of day-to-day living. At best, we can hope only to survive for a time—and then we die. There is nothing outside the self; there is no reason beyond the will. Decadence, writes C.E.M. Joad, is the loss of an object. Many of us now have no object, no objective. We hold nothing as an absolute, a criterion.

In such circumstances, randomness makes sense. The reasoning runs something like this: "Bad things happen to me; good things, too, but rarely. I don't deserve bad things, but I can't stop them from happening. My own life is so far out of my own control that there is no purpose in my attempt to change it or assert any direction. I am a victim of random occurrences, and so is everyone else. Random acts of kindness are the only goods left to me and those with whom I share my life."

If we choose, we can give up all control—but why would we want to? As bystanders, will we permit acts of brutality? Would I allow my children to suffer a random fate if I could—by my own actions—prevent it? What kind of parent would? "Oh, Junior's out crawling in the street again. He might get hit. He might not. It's real random out there." Life means *action*, including the action of

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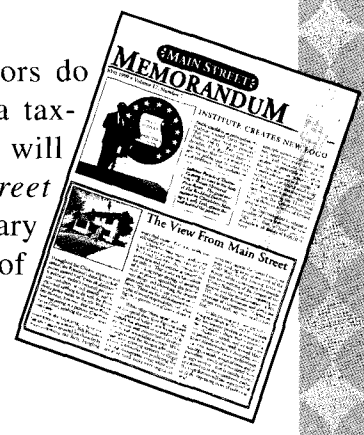

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thought, which is specific, not random.

That leaves us with kindness, something intrinsically worth seeking. The word means the state or quality of exhibiting goodness, benevolence, showing consideration, affection, or love. Surely, there's no problem with that. Except that I've noted a shift in its meaning, away from the dictionary definition and toward something that's synonymous with "nice."

Goodness, however, is not a passing affect; it's bone-deep. We all know someone who, even when all of his faults are acknowledged, comes out way on top. Such a person gives us something (an objective, a standard) to which we might aspire. True kindness (not simply "niceness") and goodness make it possible for us to reclaim a firm foundation.

The idea that a religion or philosophy is valuable does not come from a random source, but from someone or something separate and distinct. It comes not from within but from without. Somebody does something to us. Somebody good uses all the powers at his command to make a difference in our lives. And we feel, see, taste, and recognize the difference. We know that it works because we have been changed, and we have the power to change others.

Instead of the mindless axiom to "Practice Random Acts of Kindness," we should—like those strong and principled people who have changed our lives—practice calculated acts of goodness. Who needs help? What kind of help can we offer? Such a reckoning does not preclude spontaneous acts, if those actions are in accord with our nature. If we are generous, then we will also be so on the spur of the moment.

But we must understand what we're about. Demosthenes speaks to us still: "In God's name, I beg of you to think." Does somebody need immediate assistance? Shall I give it, even if the risks are great? What about the bag lady at the lunch counter? Can I pick up the tab secretly? What about letting the guy exiting from the store parking lot into my lane of traffic? He needs help, but is it safe? Am I likely to cause an accident? Is my proposed act of generosity to my kids going to be good for them or will it let them off the hook for something they need to learn in order to be responsible adults? What message am I sending them?

Ideas have consequences, Richard Weaver tells us. And I foresee a dire one headed our way. It's bad enough to find a book entitled *Random Acts of Kindness*, but now there's a kids' version, and National Random Acts of Kindness Days and Weeks, and teachers' guides to facilitate students' thinking about the concept, and websites by the handful.

It's not "just a word." Our children will be ill served if their teachers don't know the difference between random and specific, between safe and dangerous, between good and bad. In the classical tradition, the ends of education are wisdom and virtue. We are to cultivate reason, right reason, and not only in our children: We owe this to each other, to be both specific and good.

Our watchword should be Christ's admonition in Matthew 10:16: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves." That is anything but arbitrary.

And there is the belief that we Christians espouse: Jesus died for my sins.

That was an act of supreme kindness, but it sure wasn't random.

David B. Schock writes from Grand Haven, Michigan.

FOREIGN POLICY

A Maturing Europe?

by Doug Bandow

While many Asians have welcomed the election of George W. Bush, leading Europeans are nervous. In particular, they fear that President Bush will reduce their continent's free defense ride, especially as the Balkans begins to explode yet again. But it is time to expect Europeans to behave like adults in securing their own interests.

The Clinton administration was good to Europe. It expanded NATO, brokered the deal preserving an artificial Bosnia, managed the war in Kosovo, and deployed a significant garrison throughout the Balkans. At the same time, it continued to guarantee the security of populous, prosperous states that face no obvious military threats.

But that wasn't enough for the Europeans. The pre-election suggestion by Condoleezza Rice that the United States should pull its troops from Kosovo set off ill-concealed panic across the continent. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld subsequently sparked another round of hand-wringing by talking about bringing America's forces home from Bosnia.

Lt. Gen. Carlo Cabigiosu of Italy, commander of KFOR (the Kosovo garrison) argued, "politically, no doubt, for the project of restabilizing the Balkans, the U.S. is very important." A host of unnamed European officials whined to American newspapers that Washington's presence was "vital."

Clinton administration officials naturally agreed. Outgoing Secretary of State Madeleine Albright lectured her successor about the importance of preserving America's dominant role. Sen. Joseph Biden (D-DE) complained that withdrawal would be "an absolute disaster."

Still, at the very moment that Europe is pleading helplessness in the Balkans, the same officials are chortling about their newly dynamic economies. Jean-Claude Trichet, governor of the Bank of France, contends: "The European outlook, barring proof to the contrary, is one of growth. In the United States, there are signs of a fairly considerable slowdown."

The euro is climbing in value; socialist leaders, like those in France and Germany, have become tax-cutters. Despite continuing government resistance, corporate restructuring is occurring. Exports are climbing, and Europe is expected to outgrow America in 2001.

This raises the obvious question: Why must Washington continue subsidizing Europe's defense? The European Union has a much larger population than the United States; it also has a comparable economy. Today, Britain, France, and Germany each spend about as much on defense as does Russia.

Nor can Serbia compete. Europe has 1.6 million men under arms—enough to garrison the entire Balkans, if desired. The Europeans' combat effectiveness is far less than that of the United States, but they could remedy that. Indeed, the Europeans are talking of creating a more serious defense capability, which made the Clinton administration nervous.

The lack of any genuine security threat in Europe has left NATO enthusiasts talking about America's "global responsibility" and the importance of being "engaged." At the last NATO ministerial meeting in Brussels, Defense Secretary William Cohen sputtered about "unity" and the importance of avoiding an "E.U. caucus." Jessica Fugate of the Council on Foreign Relations says that NATO is important "so that we are not alone when crises arise."

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What kind of crises? Fugate warns: "risks to European security remain, which are multifaceted and multidirectional, such as international criminal networks, and thus hard to grasp and assess." For this, America must remain the dominant partner in a transatlantic military alliance, maintaining 100,000 troops in Europe? To fight crime?

The issue is not isolation versus engagement, but *what kind* of engagement. The United States possesses the strongest military, largest economy, and most dominant culture on the planet. Rather than feeling threatened by every minor civil war or social disturbance, she can remain secure, choosing when to intervene. That is, she can exercise the sort of discernment and selectivity implied by real leadership.

Real leadership also means devolving security responsibilities upon populous and prosperous allies. The Cold War threats to America and its allies have largely abated; moreover, the capabilities of the latter to defend themselves have dramatically increased. They haven't bothered to do much more, however. Almost four years ago, Gen. John Sheehan, then Supreme Allied Commander of the Atlantic, warned of "the technological gap between the United States and Europe. Soon the other members of NATO will be little more than constabulary forces, with the United States possessing the only genuine modern army." He was right. Even the Europeans were embarrassed by their appalling performance in Kosovo, fielding just 10 to 15 percent of America's combat capabilities. That reflects lack of effort, not resources. They are fully capable of doing much more.

They won't, however, because they don't believe they *need* to. They perceive the potential risks differently. Most importantly, they recognize that Washington is determined to protect them—even if they do nothing. To continue smothering Europe in America's military embrace will only encourage continued irresponsibility.

True, the Europeans are pressing to create a 60,000-man rapid-deployment force by 2003, but there is little in the continent's past behavior to suggest that the plan will become more than talk. Such a force will require real resources, something the Europeans have not been willing to provide, as long as they can rely on America.

U.S. officials recognize the problem without acknowledging the cause. Former Defense Secretary William Cohen complained that, "At a time when the United States is embarking on the largest sustained increase in defense spending in 15 years, some allies have announced only modest increases, while others are either barely maintaining spending levels or are reducing investments in defense." German officials have told John Hulsman of the Heritage Foundation that their military spending may drop to just 1.1 percent of GDP, one third of U.S. levels.

America's untoward generosity creates another problem: It encourages Europeans to hand off their problems to America—problems such as the Balkans, which is growing ever messier, with ethnic Albanian guerrillas operating in Macedonia and Serbia, or an expanding European Union.

Last year, European Commission President Romano Prodi, while visiting Latvia, said that the European Union would issue security guarantees for all E.U. members, four of whom are not members of NATO. Given the absence of any E.U. military—let alone an effective one—the enforcement burden will inevitably fall on America, as would protection of more distant states, such as the nine Central and Eastern European countries that have requested to be admitted to NATO in 2002.

The same problems are evident with U.S. policy in the Far East. China may pose the most potent potential long-term threat to America; however, the chief danger would be to Washington's dominance in East Asia, not the American homeland. The best way to discourage aggressive behavior by Beijing is to encourage those states with the most at stake to take over their own defense.

A sophisticated Taiwanese military would help deter Chinese adventurism. Japan could create and maintain the air and naval forces necessary to defend both itself and nearby sea lanes. If the Philippines is determined to spar with Beijing over the Spratly Islands, it needs to develop a serious navy. And so on. The United States should stand back and act as a distant balancer, instead of immediate meddler. But the Asians will not take on new defense responsibilities if we continue to dominate.

Washington should begin devolving security responsibilities to its allies. The Balkans is the obvious place to start. The Europeans argue that they already provide more than 80 percent of the troops and 90 percent of the financial assistance in the region. That means that they could provide *100 percent* without any strain. Indeed, where better to begin deploying the nascent rapid-deployment force?

Moreover, U.S. forces have cause to leave—and quickly. Kosovo and Macedonia are catastrophes ready to erupt. Bosnia is little better—an artificial state marked by pervasive corruption and festering hostility that survives only through a foreign military occupation. Any untoward incident, like the Mogadishu shootout in Somalia, will generate overwhelming public demands to withdraw, with the Bush administration left holding the bag.

There is no reason for the United States—which, unlike its allies, carries global burdens—to garrison every local trouble spot, especially when neighboring states have both more interests at stake and sufficient resources to act.

NATO is "the greatest alliance in history," argued Secretary Cohen. Secretary of State Colin Powell calls it "sacrosanct." But an institution so wonderful should be capable of adapting, both in terms of perceived threats and the resources available to meet those threats.

Washington should encourage development of a truly independent European defense capability. Then the Europeans could handle civil wars in the Balkans and the security of E.U. members. And the United States could worry about the big stuff, such as the reemergence of a serious hegemonic threat.

Doug Bandow is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute and a former special assistant to President Reagan.

ETHICS

Invasion of the Organ Snatchers

by Alberto Carosa

The heated discussion of human cloning and related genetic issues is overshadowing another, equally crucial, debate, on organ donation and transplantation. The two debates have a common feature: They are increasingly dividing those who are called to deal with these problems, including medical doctors,

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academics, law experts, scientists, clergy, and theologians.

Whereas the general inclination—with the notable exception of the British parliament—is to ban human cloning, the trend regarding transplants is the opposite—namely, to encourage organ donation.

The culture of organ donation received a boost late last August, when, at a six-day congress on organ transplantation, Pope John Paul II encouraged the removal of vital organs from dead patients as a genuine act of love to save the lives of others. This donation, according to the Pope, may not be unqualified and can only take place *after death*, because to act otherwise would mean intentionally to cause the death of the donor. In the Pope's words, the fact that the means of determining the moment of death has shifted from the traditional cardio-respiratory signs to the "neurological criterion" (the complete and irreversible cessation of all brain activity) "does not seem to conflict with the essential elements of a sound anthropology," provided this criterion is "rigorously applied."

But a growing minority of the scientific community is concerned that the neurological approach is invalid. So far, some 120 signatories from 19 countries—including scientists, philosophers, judges, attorneys, clergy, pro-family leaders, and disability-rights and pro-life advocates of varying political and religious persuasions—have forwarded to the Pope what constitutes the largest international public statement in history in opposition to the "brain death" criterion and *unpaired* vital organ transplantation. A few days later, the matter was taken up by the *Jornal do Brasil*, which ran a feature headlined "Movement contests the use of brain death criterion."

Signatories include such prominent "brain death" critics as Dr. Paul Byrne (United States), Dr. Cicero Coimbra (Brazil), Dr. David Evans (England), Prof. Josef Seifert (Liechtenstein), and Dr. Yoshio Watanabe (Japan). The list features many Italians, including thoracic surgeon Luigi Gagliardi, geneticist Giuseppe Sermonti, and Nerina Negrello, the flamboyant president of *Lega Nazionale Contro la Predazione di Organi e la Morte a Cuore Battente*. "Inasmuch as these controversies quite literally involve matters of life and death, physical and spiritual," they argue, "a clear understanding of their nature is vital to the survival of both life and truth, life's guardian."

To confirm with moral certainty that "the complete and irreversible cessation of all brain activity (in the cerebrum, cerebellum, and brain stem)" has occurred would require the total absence of all circulation and respiration, the statement claims. Confirmation of this absence would necessitate that the cerebrum, cerebellum, and brain stem—as well as the circulatory and respiratory systems—have been destroyed.

Observing that none of the shifting sets of "so-called" neurological criteria for determining death fulfills the requirements described by the Pope in his address, the statement argues that, "In fact, 'brain death' is not death, and death ought not to be declared unless the entire brain and the respiratory and circulatory systems have been destroyed." For vital organs to be suitable for transplantation, however, they must be living organs—and that requires removal from living human beings. Moreover, the signatories conclude,

> persons condemned to death as "brain dead" are not "certainly dead" but, to the contrary, are certainly alive. Thus adherence to the restrictions stipulated by the Pope and the prohibitions imposed by God Himself in the Natural Moral Law precludes the transplantation of unpaired vital organs, an act which causes the death of the "donor" and violates the fifth commandment of the divine Decalogue, "Thou shalt not kill" (Deut. 5:17).

One of the signatories, American physician Dr. Paul A. Byrne, has coauthored a new book, *Beyond Brain Death: The Case Against Brain Based Criteria for Human Death*, which was released by Netherlands-based publisher Kluwer Academic at the very moment that country was busy decriminalizing euthanasia. One of the groups coordinating the collection of signatures is Citizens United Resisting Euthanasia, the oldest single-issue anti-euthanasia organization in the United States. Its director, Earl Appleby, Jr., has made it clear that "we are not through by any means," and more signatures continue to amass.

This petition is likely to be remembered for another reason: an unprecedented rift in a pontifical institution. In fact, it was signed by a former secretary of the Pontifical Academy for Life (professor of bioethics Fr. Christian Marie Charlot) and two of its present members (the president of the Family of the America's Foundation Mercedes Arzu Wilson and Prof. Josef Seifert, rector of the International Academy for Philosophy in Liechtenstein), as well as two Roman Catholic bishops and other clergy, religious, and priests.

Members of a pontifical academy have distanced themselves from the official line of their institution for the first time. As Dr. Paul Byrne explained in a recent interview in London's *Catholic Times*, the dissenters' intention is not to challenge the Pope's general teaching on the matter, which he believes to be sound, but to clarify the medical aspects. In fact, he claims, the Pope may not have grasped the finer details of this complicated medical procedure. "The Holy Father is dependent on the advisers around him," contends Dr. Byrne.

> I strongly suspect that he has not been told that you can't get a healthy heart to be used for transplantation unless you get it from a living person. Although his teachings are clear, the medical aspects of it need to be clarified in that regard.

Dr. Byrne goes on to explain that, while a vital organ is being removed, there is blood pressure, the body temperature is being regulated, the heart is beating, and the person is passing urine. In short, the donor is still alive. "Brain death is a lie," he argues. "One shouldn't use the word dying because one is either alive or one is dead." And there have been documented cases of people, he points out, who have fully recovered after being declared brain dead.

John Paul II has condemned all experiments in the cloning of human embryos and has encouraged the donation of organs as a genuine act of love. But the only type of organ transplants that are acceptable, according to Dr. Byrne, are those that do not cause death—for instance, when a person offers up one of two healthy kidneys, or a lobe of his lung or liver, or donates tissue, such as bone marrow, which can be removed after death has occurred.

Alberto Carosa, the editor of Famiglia Domani Flash, *writes from Rome.*

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In The Dark

by George McCartney

History Lite

Most films have a signature moment, a scene that suggests the whole. Producer Jerry Bruckheimer and director Michael Bay have signed their feverishly silly *Pearl Harbor* with two strategically counterpoised images that surface in the aftermath of the Japanese attack. Kate Beckinsale, playing Navy nurse Evelyn Stewart, is taking blood from two young fighter pilots lying side by side in hospital beds. As it happens, the handsome donors, Rafe McCawley (Ben Affleck) and Danny Walker (Josh Hartnett), are both her lovers. (Don't get ideas; she's not that kind of nurse. I'll explain later.) The first of the signature shots comes when the camera cuts to the receptacles she's using to catch her lovers' blood. Having run low on the customary containers, she's resourcefully snaked the draining tubes into two Coke bottles. Cute. A few scenes later, the cuteness doubles with the second shot in which we see people sipping cola from red-white-and-blue Pepsi bottles. Regardless of its grim subject, this movie is determined to effervesce with all-American commercial cheer.

But there's something odd here. The PepsiCola company is on record as having adopted its now-familiar patriotic hues to support America's war effort. It seems surprising, then, they would already have been in evidence on the day before we declared war on Japan. Were Pepsi's executives so prescient that they knew hostilities were inevitable and decided to seize their goodwill marketing opportunity betimes? Not likely. Perhaps Franklin Delano Roosevelt had brought them into his confidence, revealing his strategy to provoke the Japanese into an attack. But no, this couldn't be—not on this film's grounds, anyway. Its narrative gives absolutely no indication that Roosevelt had any ulterior designs on the Japanese. (While it's hardly credible that FDR would have welcomed the Pearl Harbor attack, historical research clearly demonstrates he was hoping for some kind of lesser assault in the Pacific, just enough to force Congress to join him in declaring the war he thought America must fight.)

Bay and his scriptwriter, Randall Wallace, go to great lengths to dispel any suspicions concerning Roosevelt. We're told that the attack's architect, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto (Mako), was sending out scores of coded messages all mentioning different possible targets, thus confusing our intelligence gatherers. Further, we learn America's chief cryptographer hadn't broken the code entirely and was reduced to guessing at Japan's intentions. (This is not true. The U.S. military was reading the Japanese code quite easily by 1940.) Roosevelt, as reverently played by Jon Voight, seems shocked and devastated when the attack comes. Regathering his wits, he demands immediate retaliation against Japan. When his advisors tell him this would be impossible given America's state of military unpreparedness, he unlocks his leg braces, struggles painfully from his wheelchair to his feet, and thunders, "Do not tell me that it can't be done!" Wow! He would have been perfect for Nike's "Just Do It" campaign.

This is a Coke-and-Pepsi movie. It's more interested in feel-good equal-opportunity product placement than wrestling with inconvenient historical facts. This commercial spirit has guided the film's treatment of the warring nations. Like the competing colas, America and Japan are, beneath their superficial differences, both wholesome homes to their brave and patriotic peoples. Before the bombs fall, young servicemen in Hawaii are gadding about with flotillas of nubile nurses on their arms. In their quieter moments, however, they're all filled with noble warrior yearning. As one says with wistful disappointment, "We're as far from the war as we can get." (Talk about ironic foreshadowing.) Clearly, these boys hanker to do something drastic. Rafe does: He joins the Royal Air Force. On his arrival in England, his British commanding officer wonders if he has a death wish. Affleck juts his jaw and replies evenly, "I'm not anxious to die, just anxious to matter."

The Hawaiian and European scenes are punctuated by cuts to Japan, where we watch young Zero pilots training enthusiastically for their heroic mission as Yamamoto reluctantly plans the operation. Close-ups of the admiral's tortured face duly register his regret that he must bomb his roundeyed brothers. But what can he do? "They've cut off our oil lines; we have only 18 months left," he laments. (This is true. In July 1941, America, Britain, and the Netherlands froze Japanese assets, reducing their trade by 75 percent and their oil supply by 90. Still, the film never connects the dots leading back to FDR's Pacific strategy.) In the background, we see Japanese children flying kites in a sky of incandescent blue. The green, sun-gilded landscape below bespeaks nothing but peace. When an assistant commends Yamamoto for the brilliance of his plan, he somberly replies, "A brilliant man would find a way not to fight a war." (The Koreans and Chinese might be forgiven their skepticism on this point, having repeatedly and brutally been the objects of Japan's imperial ambitions.)

As much as possible, Bay and Wallace have studiously smoothed away unpleasantries. We never see the Japanese as anything other than admirably heroic—with good reason. The film's distributor, Buena Vista International, a division of Disney, intends to circulate it in the Japanese market. Of course, it will be a different version from the one seen here. It has been reported that (among other alterations) the studio will lop off the ending, which dramatizes Jimmy Doolittle's high-risk bombing raid on Tokyo (undertaken to revenge the Pearl Harbor attack), will be trimmed. After all, Japanese children have only recently been

Pearl Harbor

Produced by Jerry Bruckheimer Films and Touchstone Pictures
Directed by Michael Bay
Screenplay by Randall Wallace
Released by Buena Vista Pictures

A Knight's Tale

Produced by Columbia Pictures Corporation and Escape Artists
Written and directed by Brian Helgeland
Released by Columbia and Sony Pictures

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allowed to hear about the war in their classrooms. We mustn't be insensitive. Before the film opens in Germany, no doubt Bay will prune its unflattering newsreel footage of Hitler and his troops. Hey, why not? Relax. Have a Coke. Have a Pepsi. Or, if you're German, have Deutschland's soft-drink alternative: Afri-Cola. Kick back and enjoy the show. The theater of war has rarely been so entertaining.

Projects like this are invulnerable to critical analysis. *Pearl Harbor* is an extraordinary exercise in achieving market reach, a film designed to please every member of its global audience. An all-too-familiar corporate smarminess pervades the entire enterprise with its one guiding principle: Offend absolutely no one. Everything shimmers with a soft glow of burnished goodwill, signaled by repeated shots of huge setting and rising suns that invoke both the rustic American innocence of our heroes' Midwestern upbringing and the triumphal imagery of the Japanese flag. As in war, so in marketing: The first casualty is truth.

For pure cynicism, however, nothing beats the film's love story. This brings us back to Nurse Evelyn and her two flyboys. At first, she falls for Rafe, who unexpectedly proves himself a gentleman. He pledges his commitment to her on the eve of his departure for England by not going to bed with her. Later, he asks his best friend, Danny, to take care of Evelyn if "something happens to me." Thus, we're not in the least surprised when, after blasting the better part of the Luftwaffe out of the air, Rafe is shot down and reported dead. Danny dutifully brings the news to Evelyn. Soon after, as they pledge eternal loyalty to Rafe's memory, they predictably fall into each other's arms. Of course, Rafe, indelicately alive, turns up in Hawaii on December 6, just days after Evelyn discovers she's carrying Danny's baby. (Could this be a heads-up regarding the inconveniences of premarital sex?) Before the ensuing recriminations and soul-searching get very far, December 7 dawns, and Japanese bombers wing ominously into view, buzzing over a boys' baseball game and a little girl's birthday party on their way to you-know-where. (Yes, it's 7:55 A.M. on a Sunday, but this is a Coke-and-Pepsi film; you've got to have something both terribly moving and sweetly picturesque to sell product.) What follows is a truly dazzling 40-minute recreation of the Japanese attack, complete with computer-generated Zeros buzzing above and between U.S. carriers and battleships like angry wasps on speed. I must concede I was impressed. Many will find this sequence makes the rest of the film bearable.

When the explosions end and the ships are sunk and the desperate sailors trapped in the capsized U.S.S. *Arizona* have drowned, we (unfortunately) must return to the romantic triangle's denouement. Catching Rafe alone, Evelyn tells him that she had wanted to explain things, but "then all this happened." "This," of course, is the attack, during which nearly 2,400 people died and thousands were grievously wounded. In *Casablanca*, Humphrey Bogart had sense enough to tell Ingrid Bergman their romantic dilemma didn't "amount to a hill of beans" compared to the conflagration surrounding them. Here, the hill of beans is left to smolder in the harbor. Trying to ease Rafe's distress, Evelyn reveals her family condition. "I'll always love you," she tearfully assures him, "but I'm going to give my heart to Danny." Rafe, of course, becomes instantly gracious about it all, going off to make his peace with the father-to-be. A wad of nobility this large challenges the gag reflex unconscionably. And there's more, much more—another 40 minutes, in fact. With any luck at all, years from now people will be saying, "They don't make films like *Pearl Harbor* anymore."

A *Knight's Tale* chucks all claims to historical accuracy, reveling in anachronism instead. Fourteenth-century knights joust to such rock songs as "We Are the Champions" and "Taking Care of Business" while their fans do the Wave in the bleachers. Still, this charmingly unpretentious film displays more genuine historical wit than the enormously self-important *Pearl Harbor*.

This is a tale of medieval class struggle. Will (ingratiatingly played by Heath Ledger), a lowly roof-thatcher's son, longs to prove himself in the big-time jousting lists. There's just one problem: Although he displays the heart of a born champion, he's not a born aristocrat. Without patents establishing noble birth for four generations on both sides, he's limited to fighting in backwater villages where not much attention is paid to family quarterings. So he dubs himself Sir Oric of Liechtenstein and hires Geoffrey Chaucer (Paul Bettany) of *Canterbury Tales* fame to be his p.r. flak. (My favorite scene has Chaucer confronting the sleazoid who becomes his model for Pardoner. It's a mini-thesis on how authors always get the last word.)

Will is soon jousting with the best and winning the heart of the beautiful Maid Jocelyn (Shannyn Sossamon), for whom the traditional epithet "fair" must refer to her disposition, since her complexion seems distinctly African in hue (surely an oddity in 14th-century Britain, however amorously correct in the 21st).

What ensues is as slapdash and slaphappy as an Errol Flynn vehicle crossed with Bing Crosby's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* and rounded out with a *Rocky*-like denouement. All in all, it follows cinema's patented populist formula for filling theater seats with the cheeky masses.

I'll admit that, after several jousting montages featuring thundering hooves and shattering lances, I began to lose track of who was who behind the interchangeable helmet visors. On the other hand, my 11-year-old, Liam, had no such difficulty. He eagerly followed Will's swift advancement through the warrior ranks to a showdown with a sneering aristo who mocks his lower-class origins. Worse, this villain considers women nothing more than tournament prizes, ranking them somewhat lower in importance than gift horses and victory trophies. He does make allowance for Jocelyn's superior charms, however. As he tells Will, he intends to saddle her and put her on his mantel. Hiss, boo!

While *Pearl Harbor* strains to appear heroically old fashioned, *A Knight's Tale* effortlessly hits the mark by refusing to take itself seriously.

* * *

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The Hundredth Meridian

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Resistance

On my knees in the bright pebbly waters of Hermit Creek, I looked up from the cotton shirt I was wringing out to the buff-colored rim of the Kaibab Plateau, over 4,000 vertical feet overhead.

"It's a long way down from up there," I told Tom Sheeley, who had just arrived along the trail from camp at the pool.

"We have a mile and a half to go still to the river, remember."

"And a longer way yet back up," I added. For individuals as well as civilizations, there's a penalty inevitably to be paid for yielding too much ground. "Where's Tib?" "Tib" was Tim Smith, but after months of hay feber we all found it easier and finally more natural to say "Tib," as Tom came out "Tob" and Chip, "Chib."

"He's off reading somewhere." Tom, who carried a can of Ice House beer in his hand, produced a second one from the pocket of his nylon shorts. "Care for a lunch cylinder?"

The case of beer, backpacked down the previous month by Tom and Tim and cached beneath a snaky-looking rock pile, was a luxury.

"*God yes!*"

I hung my shirt, underwear, and socks to dry from an acacia branch overhanging the pool while the two of us lolled in the fresh waterspout cascading between limestone boulders, drinking beer and watching a pair of ravens fly reconnaissance 50 feet above the canyon floor.

"*Beaudy*-ful!" Tom pronounced from under the waterfall.

"It's Perfect," I agreed, aware of the sun hot on my trailing white legs given lift by the rushing water, while minnows nibbled at my toes.

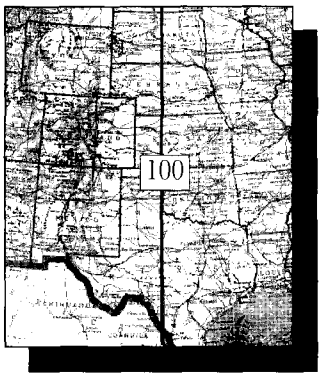
His gray beard emerged out of the falls as he swallowed off the beer and tossed the empty onto the bank beside his shorts and hiking shoes.

"Never despair," Tom said. "To despair is to turn your back on God."

"I know that. It's tough not to at times, though."

Together, we waded from the pool and stood, first on one leg and then the other, pulling on our clothes.

"'My proud young friend, come here



right now, / Before Sarastro you will bow,'" Tom sang, from *The Magic Flute*. "Steak Diane for dinner tonight," he finished in his normal voice.

We were set up at the old Hermit Camp, used to accommodate tourists until 1931 when the Park Service quit maintaining the Hermit Trail. Today the camp amounts to three or four bare places among the cacti, one of them (ours) overhung by a rock ledge offering shade during the heat of the day, and an open-air toilet. For company we had a party of women from Nebraska camped a hundred yards off on their way over to Boucher Rapids—among them a dark-haired, strong-looking girl with sunburned arms and cornflower eyes that struck at you from under the brim of her Lady Cornhusker cap. This was the campsite where Barbara Sheeley had been stung twice on the hand by a scorpion several years ago, but on this trip our concern was for deermice, some 40 percent of which are carriers of hantavirus, the bubonic plague of the Southwest. On account of the mice, we kept our food stashed in the Army rocketboxes provided by the Park Service.

Tim came in with his book, and we all had another beer. Then he and Tom fired up the gas stoves, and we prepared the evening meal, beginning with the thick steaks from Tom's butcher in Flagstaff. Seated on a low rock ledge we ate dinner from our laps, staring out under the overhang at the terraced wilderness of rock rising to the sky and falling gently backward beneath round white clouds already edged with gold. From behind the screen of acacia trees, girlish laughter sounded sweetly.

"You remember what Abbey said about bringing women along on a hike?" I asked Tom.

"He said it helps a man keep his mind off sex."

"It's a good line," I said, "but I've never felt he really meant it."

From Hermit's Rest on the Kaibab Limestone down to Hermit Camp is a distance of 7.7 miles by the Hermit Trail, in places steeper than breakfast at Aspen. We washed up, turned in at a little past eight o'clock MST (having more than enough, Arizona doesn't save sunshine, it burns it), and rolled out at dawn in time to see the ladies from Nebraska already on the trail over to Boucher, waving to us from across the creek. Lady Cornhusker marched second in line, directly behind the goose-faced, somehow attractive leader. For breakfast, we ate coffee, reconstituted *huevos rancheros*, and bacon, adjourned to the swimming hole for morning sheep dip, and set out on the mile-and-a-half hike down to the river.

Hermit Creek enters the Colorado River near Mile Point 95, the side canyon depositing the boulders that form Hermit Rapids. Tom, a professional riverman as well as one of the finest classical guitarists of our time, squinted appraisingly at the crashing white waves and hanging spray exploding from the flow of glassy green water, smelling strongly of salt. "River's low," he said. "Maybe 10,000 cfs—no more."

"Where was it Ed got suckered into running the rapids when Reneé volunteered to ride in the boat?" I asked.

"That was Lava Falls, upstream from Diamond Creek—celebrated, in Kim Crumbo's words, 'in song, verse, poem, and frequent profanity.' Guys I knew who floated the river with him said he was scared s---less of whitewater, no matter how he described it in his books."

A foaming wave to the left of an underwater boulder collapsed into a churning hole (called an "eater" by boatmen), then rose again on the other side to form a second wave as it struck the eddying backwater. Like all writers—like me—Ed Abbey maybe had just a little more imagination than was good for him.

We hung around on the sandy beach for a while, waiting for boats to drift downstream. When they failed to appear, we hiked up the streambed back to camp for another dip in the pool and

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more reality suppressants.

"There are eight billion people on the planet," Tom remarked from beneath the water, "and here we are, the three of us—alone down here."

We spent a second night at Hermit, rose at four, cooked breakfast, and hit the trail around six, tramping eastward across the Tonto Platform over to Monument Creek in the cool shadow of the Redwall. Reaching Monument Creek before nine, we made camp under a sandstone ledge screened by acacia trees and sawgrass. When the tents were up and the sleeping bags unrolled inside, Tim went to the creek to pump water, while Tom and I wandered upstream. Two desert bighorns, both young rams, browsed the grassy bench above the watercourse and Tom discovered, under a rock, a purplish green scorpion the size of a small lobster. Seated on a sandstone slab, we passed the water bottle between us and grinned at one another.

"Being down here makes me want to write," I said. "That's what makes it real, finally."

"Music, playing the guitar, training, kicking butt on the Tonto, wilderness, good food and booze, companionship—it's all interrelated, everything connected up with everything else."

"Everything that used to be called civilization, you mean."

"Yes. And f- - - a bunch of consumer socialism."

We made do with a smaller swimming hole that evening and lay down in the lingering desert heat while tree frogs shrilled from the cliffs above the pool. Well before seven the next day we climbed out the switchbacks up to the Tonto again and hiked around a nose of purple cliff to Salt Creek. From the trail we had a view of the river in the lower gorge below, running red this morning, not green, after the Little Colorado had kicked in with a load of sediment washed downstream by an afternoon thunderstorm the previous day. Salt Creek, considered a perennial watercourse, at first glance appeared dry, to the consternation of Tim, who was serving as water wallah on the trip. But Tom found a pool downstream, and Tim, digging with his hands in the gravel where we had set the packs, made a reservoir large enough to supply water for the purifier to pump from.

We sat up under the cliff for lunch and afterward hiked downstream to drink gin in the shade of an acacia grove growing between high rock walls, before a shadow passed swiftly overhead, accompanied by the creak and whoosh of slow wings.

"Chib. Did you make sure your pack was secured before we left camp?"

"I *thought* it was."

"Look up there, on that ledge."

I looked and saw a glossy raven perched with something oblong and brown in his beak, as if displaying a trophy.

"Raoul got into my package of Ry Krisp," I said.

In camp we set a Nutribar out on a rock and waited under the overhang. Two minutes later the bird made a pass above the streambed and set down a few feet away from the bar. Cocking his long head, he observed us with partly open beak, but made no further approach.

"That's a smart bird," I said, "with a guilty conscience. He screwed with our stuff—why should we be doing him any favors? He figures that bar's bird-bait, not a peace offering."

The raven flew off, leaving the fruit bar untouched, and we returned our attention to the gin bottle until Tom, on a hunch, walked quietly across to the dry waterfall downstream, peered over it, then beckoned me to follow him. Below the fall, Raoul approached upstream on foot over the gravel bed, his wings lifted slightly away from his body and his beak still partway open against the heat, sneaking up on camp.

After supper, we sat with the tents up and our backs against the canyon wall to watch the flashbulbs go off along the rim of Hopi Point as the tourists sought to capture the sunset, invisible to us in our geologic crack below, on celluloid. Now and then, when the wind was right, the sound of the Park Service's shuttle-bus engines was audible from a mile out and 4,000 feet up. Tom made a megaphone with his hands and let out a roar like a grizzly bear crossed with a catamount in defiance of the invisible thousands above us. "Work hard, play hard, practice your art, enjoy life—and be ready to make the most of the first real opportunity you get," he concluded.

Tree frogs playing their bladder-sacs like bagpipes kept us awake much of the night. We awoke at dawn, packed in the camp, and hit the trail for Horn Creek and Indian Gardens around six. The sky at sunrise was a hot blue haze, but a springing wind cooled the air as the sun ascended above the spiny, gray-green Tonto, Isis Temple and Wotan's Throne, Vishnu Temple, and the velvet gorge of Bright Angel Canyon. Ordinarily resentful even of a rifle and daypack on my shoulders, I kept my own pace in the line of march, falling back where the footing felt uncertain under the weight of the 40-pound pack. I caught up finally a mile out from Indian Gardens, where Tom and Tim had halted to load the three-liter box of Franzia White Rosé, the canned fruit, tomatoes, asparagus, and pasta cached beneath a pile of rocks, and we hiked on together to the developed campsuit, where tourists swarmed like dung beetles and the first mules were arriving from Grand Canyon on the South Rim. Tom turned to Tim and me in the trail, walking backward now, wrinkling his nose and grinning happily from his beard.

"Ever noticed these people who smell like chemicals and plastic instead of human sweat?" he asked.

That evening we "utilized" the designated campsite with its ramada and picnic table, close by the Clivus and under the watchful eye of the Park Ranger. When supper was finished, we hiked out to Plateau Point with what was left of the rosé and drank it overlooking Pipe Creek Rapids while the sun went down behind Dana Point and the tourists standing around tried to trap it in their cameras as it showed itself fleetingly between scarves of gray cloud. Many, including a party of subcontinental Indians, were foreigners, but even our fellow Americans seem less and less recognizable nowadays. We waited until we were alone to drink the last of the wine together.

"Here's to a great trip, mates," Tom said. "You know, it's about this time on a hike I get homesick and start to miss my wife. Then when I've been home a few days all I can think of is getting back down here in the ditch again."

In the night when I got up to visit the Clivus, the lights of Grand Canyon glared like a giant spacecraft hovering far above at the verge of the mighty cliff, like something in a dream. On climbout next morning (4.5 trail miles, 4,000-plus vertical feet), with the lights extinguished and the buildings barely perceptible against a lowering sky, the dream inverted itself, and we became in my imagination the fantasy, myth, or legend: three isolated men struggling upward from the bowels of the earth through the Great Hole, the Sipapu, as the Hopi and Navajo believe the first humans did, to inherit the earth and begin the world over again.

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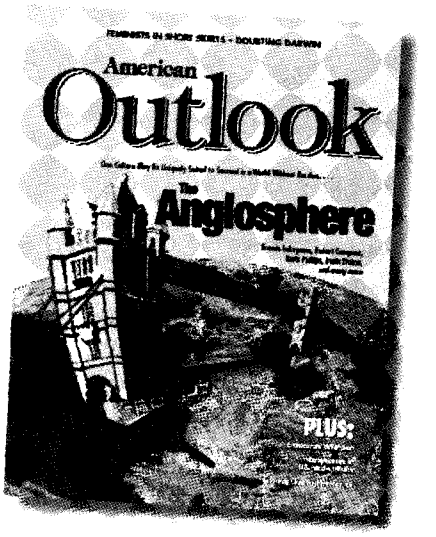

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